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# LETTERS

TO

S E R E N A :

CONTAINING,

- I. The Origin and Force of Prejudices.
- II. The History of the Soul's Immortality among the Heathens.
- III. The Origin of Idolatry, and Reasons of Heathenism.

As also,

- IV. A Letter to a Gentleman in Holland, showing SPINOSA's System of Philosophy to be without any Principle or Foundation.
- V. *Motion essential to Matter*; in Answer to some Remarks by a Noble Friend on the *Confutation of SPINOSA*.

To all which is Prefix'd,

- VI. A Preface; being a Letter to a Gentleman in London, sent together with the foregoing Dissertations, and declaring the several Occasions of writing them.

By Mr. T O L A N D.

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Opinionum Commenta delet Dies,  
Naturæ Judicia confirmat. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2.*

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L O N D O N ;

Printed for Bernard Lintot at the Middle-Temple Gate in Fleet-  
street. M. DCC. IV.

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## Advertisement concerning the Faults of the Press.

**N**Otwithstanding the Care has been us'd in correcting this Book, yet the Reader must with his Pen amend as follows. In the Preface, to avoid Ambiguity, for Mennonite read Menno-nist. Page 24. line 3. read Ionic before Philosophers. The Marginal Note in p. 41. mark thus (\*) ought to be refer'd to l. 9. of p. 50. P. 75. l. 16. for eighth read seventh. In p. 90. l. 13. after the word Minds, add this Period : From the same Original, and in the same manner, the Poets did vastly increase the Catalogue of the Gods, apostrophing as such not only the Winds, Meteors, Clouds, Rivers, Fountains, Hills, and all Parts of the Universe ; but likewise Facultys, Passions, Habits, Accidents, and every thing they cou'd express by one word, or which they cou'd address as a Person ; and they presently made it a God or a Goddess, as the Word happen'd to be of the Masculine or Feminine Gender, which was all the Rule they observ'd in Deitys of so little consequence. Pag. 103. l. 10. for on read over. P. 127. l. 23. read many before Mediators. P. 174. for mer read mere. P. 184. l. 2. after Relations, read the Results of peculiar internal Dispositions, or. P. 199. l. 20. blot out of before Action. P. 225. l. 29. for little read stinted. In the Notes, consequati is put for consequati in the last Line of p. 80, as ï is put for ï in the first Line of p. 49. and perhaps there may be found a few others like these, not capable to perplex an intelligent and candid Reader. The Greek is printed without Accents, which are a useless, troublesome, and no very antient Invention ; nor shou'd there have bin any Abbreviations or Ligatures, had the Author's Directions bin observ'd, there being no more Reason or Authority for such things in the Greek than in the Latin, to speak nothing of the Beauty of the Page.

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THE  
P R E F A C E;

Being a Letter to a Gentleman in London, sent together with the following Dissertations, and containing the several Occasions of writing them.

I. **I**N all your Letters, SIR, you insinuate that considering the Place I am in, and the Company I keep, I must needs forget my Books as well as my Acquaintance ;

2

## The Preface.

quaintance ; which you kindly endeavour to excuse, tho not wholly to approve. As for observing no regular Correspondence, I believe you receiv'd Satisfaction in my last, nor are you to expect any thing more from me on that Subject : wherefore now, instead of the public News or the private Intrigues of this part of the World, I'll send you some account of my own Studys. 'Tis, I readily confess, one of the barrenest and least entertaining Themes I cou'd take ; but you may thank your self for the Trouble, as I hope you'll acquit me from the Choice. And, first of all, I must frankly say, that you are very unjust to this Country, and that all your Comparisons between foggy Air and cloudy Understandings, between slow Motions and dull Conceptions, between immense Wilds and Marshes and indigested Imaginations or immethodical Common places, are altogether

## The Preface.

altogether groundless: nor needs there any other Censure of your Partiality, than to put you in mind of those great Names for War and Peace, for Arts and Letters, which this Country has in all times produc'd, with which it is adorn'd at present, and with many of whom you might have agreeably convers'd at London, were you less conceited of your own Countrymen, or had you a greater regard to Strangers. For there's but too much reason for the Complaints, which most Foreigners make of the Coldness and Neglect they commonly meet in England, and very often from those to whom abroad they have bin most friendly and obliging.

2. **T H I S** Town, where I remain at present, seems to be the Metropolis of Politeness and Gallantry. As being the Seat of the Government, you may be sure the most refin'd Wits,

## The Preface.

the most shining Beautys, and the most splendid Equipages make a Figure here ; besides a perpetual Concourse of Strangers, Men of the first Distinction in their own Countrys, whose Curiosity excited, and whose Fortunes enabl'd 'em to see other Men and Manners. Tho they abound with true and useful Knowledg, yet I own to you, that there's little to be found of what the mistaken World is apt to honor with the name of Learning ; and tho they have variety of excellent Books, yet bookish Porers for Wisdom are the most contemptible sort of Animals among 'em. To judg of things heré by Appearance, there's but one continu'd Scene of Love and Gayety among the Young and the Fair, temper'd indeed, but not interrupted by the Men of Politics and Employment. A hasty Passenger, or one that cannot produce himself into all Companys, sees no more ; and knows less

## The Preface.

less than he did at home, by giving his Friends a wrong Account. But believe me, SIR, I never met in any Part with choicer or more numerous Collections of Books in private Librarys, with freer Inquirers into the Series of History and the Secrets of Nature, nor with any (in a word) who better understood the Art of making Study a help to Conversation, of reading to good purpose by practising the World, of distinguishing Pedantry from Learning, and Ceremony from Civility.

3. IN such a Place you may imagine it must be my own fault, if I neglect those Studys, to which you know me so much addicted, and which I may rather improve than abandon by such Variety of diverting Intervals. I assure you, that while I enjoy Health and Liberty, no Consideration shall be able to debarr me from the use  
 a 3 of

## The Preface.

of good Books, wherein I am persuaded the only perfect Pleasure is to be found: for tho I love a great many other Pleasures natural to Man, and that I temperately indulge my self in all that are lawful, yet I must agree with common Experience, that in every one of them there's always a mixture of Pain, either in the Expectation, in the Enjoyment, or in the Consequences; whereas in going over an entertaining Book, the Reader tastes an absolute Satisfaction without any disturbing Alloy, unmindful of the past, not solicitous for the future, and wholly taken up with his present Happiness. I have therefore the Power and the Will to pursue my former Studys, as well as many Occasions to increase that Knowledge, which is the Ornament and Perfection of our Nature: but you are to impute the small Advances I make under such favourable Circumstances, not to want

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want of Inclination, but of Capacity.

4. THO I have less Business than some People think, or at least report, yet when I first came hither, I did resolve to confine my self to Reading and Converse, without ever yielding to the Temptation of writing so much as a familiar Letter: but I was quickly oblig'd to take other Measures, by the repeated Desires of a Correspondent, to whom it's not in my power to deny any thing. The Person lives on this side the Sea, tho not in this Town; and, what will further mortify your Partiality, it is a fair Lady, who was pleas'd to ask my Opinion concerning the Subjects of the three first Dissertations in the Pacquet annext, and which I send to convince you that I was not quite so idle as you thought. She's Wife to a Man of conspicuous Dignity, which is all that imports you to know

## The Preface.

at present of her Person.

5. NOW do I see the inmost Thoughts of your Soul, as well as if I had the managing of all its Weights and Springs, or had the very forming of your Brain. You may remember how often I took the part of the other Sex against your Prejudices rather than your Judgment. I was conscious, it's true, of the Goodness of my Cause; but, without Vanity, I cou'd defend a worse against such Arguments, as were only drawn from the habitual Discourse of your Companions, from the ordinary bad Education of Women, or from the famous Ladys of that place where you happen'd to be first bred; and with whom you had a more intimate Acquaintance, than with any of a better Character, either since or before. How often was I forc'd to describe to you what rude, unmannerly, ignorant, and rough-bewn Monsters, these  
of

## The Preface.

of our Sex use to be, who are not cultivated and polisht by Conversation or Letters; and that the Wives and Daughters of such Peasants have generally more Wit and Cunning, a greater share of Breeding and Sagacity? Whether the Exclusion of Women from Learning be the Effect of inveterate Custom, or proceeds from Design in the Men, shall be no Inquiry of mine: but if a Woman once in her Life happens to pry into Books, and that upon this she grows troublesome, affected, or ridiculous (as 'tis a thousand to one she does not) what a clutter do we make about this matter, how ready are we to improve it against their natural Genius, and what Triumphs are we decreeing to the Superiority of our own Understandings? Whereas, God knows, this is nothing at all to the purpose, or at most but the same thing with the Impertinence, Pride, and Pedantry of those Men, who

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who are only Smatterers in Learning, superficial Readers of Books, the sworn Heralds of Authors and Editions, Collectors of hard or high-sounding Words and crabbed Phrases, eager Hunters after Rules and Etymologies, or mere Scholars, and therefore mere Asses. I won't repeat what I demonstrated to you (for I thought it worth the Pains) about the Parity of the intellectual Organs in both Sexes, and that what puts 'em both on the same foot in Discourse of ordinary Business (which is deny'd by no body) makes 'em equally capable of all Improvements, had they but equally the same Advantages of Education, Travel, Company, and the Management of Affairs.

6. I MIGHT dispense with the Trouble of alledging Reasons, where Experience is so express of my side; and 'tis not likely that you have for-  
got

## The Preface.

got some intire Volumes, which I recommended to your Library, containing nothing but the Lives of such Women, among the Antients and the Moderns, as became famous in their own Time, and deserv'd to have their Names transmitted to Posterity, for their admirable Writings in Philosophy, Divinity, Morality, and History, in Verse and Prose, as well as for their approv'd Skill in Painting, in Musick, and in all the other Arts and Sciences, in the Conduct of formidable Wars, and the Administration of Civil Affairs, no less than in private Oeconomy.

DIOGENES LAERTIUS dedicates to a Lady the History of the Opinions as well as the Lives of the antient Philosophers; and therefore we must suppose that she understood their several Systems, many of 'em extremely intricate and abstruse, especially those in which she most delighted, the Philosophy of PLATO and EPICURUS.

Monsieur

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Monsieur MENAGE has written a whole Book of the Female Philosophers, inscrib'd to a Woman, now alive, the Celebrated Madam D A C I E R, Daughter to the great Philologist T A N A T Q U I L F A B E R. All the Learned World has done Justice to her excellent Works, and no body questions but she's one of the best Critics of our Time in the Greek and Latin Authors, of which she ample Pension settl'd on her by the French King is truly the weakest Argument, considering some others that are in his Pay. I could write a Volume to you my self of such as I know to be in several Parts of Europe, without recalling from the Dead the Pythagoric Ladys of antient Italy. And among divers others in England (where nevertheless they are scarce enough) you may find a Lady not personally known to me, who is absolute Mistress of the most abstracted Speculations in the Metaphysic, and who

with

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with an easy Turn of Stile and Argument has defended Mr. LOCK's Essay of Human Understanding, against the Letters of an Eminent Divine. Her Book is intitul'd, A Defence of the Essay of Human Understanding, written by Mr. LOCK, ---- In Answer to some Remarks on that Essay.

7. F O R Womens wisely governing of States and their valiant Conduct in War, I need not go back to the Babylonian SEMIRAMIS, the Scythian THOMYRES, the British BOADICEA, or the Palmyrean ZENOBIJA. What think you of MARGARET the famous Regent of the Spanish Netherlands? And how often have I known you transported in reading the glorious Annals of our own most learned Linguist, Queen ELIZABETH, who chose and directed her incomparable Counsellors, and who wisely  
gave

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gave hopes to the Papists of her Favour at the first, that she might afterwards (as she did) with the greater Security establish the Protestant Religion on an unshaken Foundation? Thus she became in a small time the Terror of her Enemies, the Darling of her Subjects, the Support of her Allies, and fill'd all Europe then with Envy and Admiration, as she has since done the whole World with her Name. At this very instant, Queen ANNE, who grants the same Throne, and who proposes ELIZABETH for her Pattern, abundantly shows what a Lady is capable to do. For as she yields to no Prince whatsoever for the Administration of common Justice in her Dominions, in maintaining most powerful Fleets by Sea and numerous Armies by Land, in leading the Grand Alliance of so many different Nations and Persuasions against the Tyranny of France, and providing for Supplies for the  
Wars.

## The Preface.

*Wars in Germany, Flanders, Spain, and the Indies : so (what seems to be yet a weightier Task) she keeps such an even Balance among the several contending Partys at home, that they are not able, according to their unnatural Dispositions, to oppress or devour one another ; and even such as oppose her just Title in favor of a pretended Brother, find her as merciful in her Lenity to their Persons, as prudent in preventing their pernicious Designs. She has given sufficient Proofs that she will not be influenc'd by the Clamors of Bigots from any Quarter, as well knowing 'em to be the restless Firebrands of Society, and the Disturbers of the public Tranquillity, under pretence of having greater Zeal than others for Religion, while they only push forward their own particular Piques and Designs, tho' under the false color of advancing God's Cause or the Church. Nevertheless she generously endeavours*

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to quiet and satisfy the Minds of all sorts of Men, without neglecting the most unreasonable; which extraordinary Goodness (not duly understood at the beginning) did animate the malignant Party too hastily to show their vindictive and arbitrary Spirit, as it drew some peaceable Murmurings from the Friends of Liberty, out of Apprehensions for her Majesty's Safety and the Preservation of the Commonwealth. But her Enemy's were sadly disappointed, and her dutiful Subjects seasonably confirm'd, when it appear'd to all the World (and to us here especially) by her Speech at the opening of this Session of Parliament, that she wou'd not only govern the Church and State according to the known Laws of England, but likewise resolutely maintain the Regal Succession in the Protestant Line, with a full and impartial Toleration to all Protestant Dissenters. Here's but a short Character of what's due to the Merits of a Woman,

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man, and this under the Disadvantage of succeeding so great a Man as King WILLIAM. Or if there wanted yet an Example, SIR, to reconcile you to Female Ability, I wou'd alledg the Presumptive Heir of our Crown, her Electoral Highness the Princess SOPHIA, who for the many Languages she speaks so perfectly, for her vast Knowledg in History, her deep Insight in State Affairs, and nice understanding of the principal Controversys in Religion and Philosophy, is highly applauded by most of the Learned Men in Europe. Now, if after all these Reasons and Instances, you are not yet become a sincere Convert, you shall not only be pronounc'd an obstinate Heretick, but be deliver'd over to the Scorn of the Ladys, as an adequate Punishment of your Crime.

WILLIAM. 1688. 8. 24. T

## The Preface

8. BUT however you continue dispos'd, as to this matter, yet the Length and Number of the Discourses I send hereby, are a sufficient Answer to what you wrote of my ordinary Occupations in this Place. The Lady at whose Request I wrote the most of 'em, wants no Qualifications for comprehending their Contents, no more than she wanted Curiosity to propose the Questions. She understands none of the antient Languages, tho she knows very well the Importance of Authority, and will believe no Matters of Fact without it. But as well for your own sake, as to obviate the Scruples of those to whom you may occasionally show these Letters (and you have leave to do so as many as you please) I have added all the Original Words of the Quotations in the Margin, tho in my Discourse to the Lady they run in the same continu'd Thred and  
Stile

## The Preface.

Stile with the rest. This has bin the  
laudable Method of the Antients, not-  
withstanding the Moderns have so  
strangely perplex'd their Readers with  
the odd manner of inserting their Au-  
thoritys: nor did ever any Person pre-  
tend that a Roman Lady of good  
Sense cou'd not read C I C E R O of  
Human Dutys, or his Dialogues a-  
bout Divination, because he has artful-  
ly wrought into his own Text and Words,  
so many Passages of the Greek Wri-  
ters; whereas no Woman on Earth (and  
very few Men) can make any thing  
of S E L D E N or S A L M A S I U S,  
without being tir'd and disgusted, which  
cou'd not fail, even had they written  
in the vulgar Languages. To say  
that Ladys ought not to be troubl'd  
with Authority in Reasoning, is not  
only to say that they are unreasonable  
Creatures, but also that the Scripture  
must never be quoted to'em in Religion;  
because the Men will not let them

## The Preface.

learn Hebrew, or that they are not willing themselves to spoil the Softness of their Pronunciation by so harsh a Language.

9. YOU may depend upon it, SIR, that my Correspondent is one of the most curious Persons you ever knew, and Mistress of a vast Compass of Knowledge, having read all that's worth the pains in the Modern Tongue, to speak nothing of the best Translations from the antient Originals: and doubtless you'll allow a Lady to admire those old Men that are long since dead, provided she esteems the young Men that deserve it among the Living. Tho some may think S. E. R. B. N. A. an imaginary Lady, yet I assure you in particular that she's a very real Person, which I the rather repeat, both to create in you a better Opinion of Women, Having so frequently press'd you to marry; and in hopes that you'll  
give

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give such an Education to your Daughters (if ever you have any) as to be a leading Example to others: for the Practice of one Man of Fortune, Birth, and Reputation, has often gone very far towards reforming a whole Country. As for others, 'tis no matter if they still believe *SERENA* a Romantic Name, like the Marchioness of Monsieur de FONTENELLES in his Plurality of Worlds: for they'll be so just however to acknowledge, that if I had the making of a Woman according to my own Fancy, she shou'd be quite another thing from those vain, giddy, affected, prattling, and gawdy things, who are as cheap as they are common, and who, as they are nothing but Outside themselves, value nothing but Outside in others; being Strangers to all good Qualitys, void of solid Vertue and true Merit; fit only for an hour's Diversion or Amusement, but not for the principal De-

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light and indissoluble Society of Life. This is no more a Reflection on the Women, than on the generality of the Men, whose Poppery, Singularity, Pride, Ignorance, and Intemperance, must set 'em at least on an equal bottom with the other Sex. Nor ought this Consideration to heighten your Aversion, but your Caution, since being none of those Men, you may reasonably expect your match among the Women.

10. BUT leaving the Ladys for this time, I must prepare you a little, SIR, for reading the Letters annext, by telling you the several Occasions of writing them. The Subject of the first Letter is The Origin and Force of Prejudices, not from their physical, but their moral Causes. The Occasion was my showing to SERENA the following Passage of CICERO.

Neither

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\* Neither Parents (says he) nor Nurf, nor Schoolmaster, or Poet, or Playhouse depraves our Senses, nor can the Consent of the Multitude mislead them : but all sorts of Traps are laid to seduce our Understandings, either by those whom I just now mention'd, who when they receive us tender and ignorant, infect and bend us as they please ; or else by that Pleasure which lies so deeply rooted in every one of our Senses, (the pretended Follower of Good, but the real Mother of all Evils) corrupted by whose Allurements, we do not sufficiently distinguish those

b 4      things

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\* Sensus nostros non Parens, non Nutrix, non Magister, non Poeta, non Scena depravat, non multitudinis Consensus abducit : at vero Animis omnes tenduntur Insidiaz, vel ab iis quos modo enumeravi, qui teneros & rudes cum acceperunt, insciunt & flectunt ut volunt ; vel ab ea, quæ penitus in omni sensu implicata insidet, imitatrix Boni voluptas, Malorum autem mater omnium, cujus

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things that are good by Nature, because they want this Softness and Titillation. Admiring the masterly Strength, and yet natural Easiness of these Words, she own'd to me, that after discovering many Prejudices to be really such, yet she did not find her self perfectly cur'd of their Influence and frequent Returns. Wherefore she demanded my Opinion of this matter in Writing, which I perform'd in as brief a manner as I cou'd, taking that very Passage for my Text; showing the successive Growth and Increase of Prejudices thro every step of our Lives, and proving that all the Men in the World are join'd in the same Conspiracy to deprave the Reason of every individual Person. I have drawn as lively a Picture as I cou'd in little, of the Pre-

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cujus Blanditiis corrupti quæ natura bona sunt, quibus dulcedine hac & Icabit carent, non cernimus satis. De Leg. lib. 1.

judices

## The Preface.

judices in all Conditions of Men, nor have I tax'd any thing but what is blam'd by every one in others, however they may indulge their own Mistakes: and he that will infer, that I am against either Learning, or Religion, or Government, from what I have censur'd in Schools, Universitys, Churches, or Statesmen, may with as good reason pretend that I am against breeding up or nursing of Children, against all Professions and Trades, against ordinary Conversation, or living in Society; since there's none of these without their peculiar Abuses, and that they are only such Abuses which I disprove.

11. THE second Letter contains The History of the Soul's Immortality among the Heathens, and was written at SERENA's Request. After asking me one day, whether Justice was done to P L A T O in

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a French Translation of his *PHæDO*, which I recommended to her, and my answering that his Sense was pretty well represented, tho' his Elegance far from being express; she wonder'd that the reading of that Book cou'd add any Force to *CATO's* Resolution of laying violent hands on himself, to avoid falling under the Usurpation of *CÆSAR*; and much more that it cou'd so transport *CLEOMBROTUS* of *Ambracia* as to precipitate himself into the Sea; the sooner to arrive at that happy State therein describ'd: acknowledging that she found little cogent Evidence, and a world of precarious Suppositions, throughout that whole tedious Dialogue. I told her that Divine Authority was the surest Anchor of our Hope; and the best if not the only Demonstration of the Soul's Immortality: I added, that it was not strange to find this Opinion doubted or deny'd by many of the *Heathens*; and made a  
a matter

## The Preface

matter of such Indifference by most of  
em; considering how it first came to  
be known among them, and the feeble  
Reasons they had to believe it: conclu-  
ding, that C A T O would not have  
surviv'd the Liberty of Rome, had he  
never seen the Works of P L A T O;  
that the Story of C L E O M B R O T U S  
was far from being well attested; that  
some of the Antients themselves laid lit-  
tle stress on the Arguments there put in  
the mouth of S O C R A T E S; and that  
C I C E R O, the profest Admirer of  
P L A T O; and particularly of this  
Book, cou'd yet give his Censure of it  
in these words: \* But I know not  
how it happens (says he) that  
while I read I assent; but when I  
have laid aside the Book, and be-  
gin to reason with my self about  
the

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\* Sed nescio quo modo, dum lego assentior: cum  
posui Librum, & mecum ipse de Immortalitate Ani-  
marum

## The Preface.

the Soul's Immortality, all that Assent is vanish'd. She was surpriz'd to hear me talk of a Time when this Opinion begun among the Heathens, as if like other Notions it had its proper Authors, Favourers, or Opposers; all which I roundly affirm'd to her, and that withal I wou'd show her the gradual Progress of it thro' all the Parts of the Earth then known, together with the true Original of the Poetical Fables concerning the Elysian Fields, the Rivers, Judges, Gates, and Ferryman of Hell, of Souls being disquieted for want of orderly Burial, and manifest Proofs that the antient Egyptians were the genuine Fountains of all Learning and Religion to the Heathen World. All this I have endeavour'd to make out, I will not say by the best Authorities that ever were, but by the best in the

marum coepi cogitare, Affensio omnis illa elabiqur.

## The Preface.

most antient Books we have remaining ; for in these cases Suppositions ought to go for nothing, and therefore when we say that such or such were the first that taught Astronomy, that built Temples, that practis'd Magick, we do not mean absolutely the first ( for in so many Ages who cou'd be certain of that ? ) but the first that can be prov'd on Record so to have done ; and thus I wou'd be understood whenever I express my self in that manner. I have in this Letter likewise prov'd, that the Opinion of the Soul's Immortality had not its beginning from the Philosophers, as making such an Inference from the Spontaneous Motions, Reasoning, or Speech of Men ; but, on the contrary, I have shown this Notion among the Heathens to have been first taken up by the Mob, popular Traditions often becoming the Doctrins of Philosophers, who strive to support by good Reasons what the others began with none

or

## The Preface.

or very bad ones. If what I have alledg'd be found to be true, it first confutes those who commonly suppose that the Heathens had learnt the Soul's Immortality from the Jews, and secondly the Opinion which Dr. COWARD has espous'd, \* That the separate Existence of Human Souls proceeded from the Heathen Philosophers and no others; tho when I wrote that Letter I did not know there was any such Book in the world as the Doctor's, which I have but lately seen, and found nothing in it to my purpose.

12. IN the third Letter written likewise to SERENA, and at her own Desire, you'll find The Origin of Idolatry, explain'd after a very different manner from what is commonly receiv'd. There also you may read the first Causes of the Heathen Temples,

Grand Hall, p. 105.

Priests,

general notion of the  
the nature and end of the  
the nature of a future state

## The Preface.

Priests, and Altars, their Feasts, and Sacrifices ; of Images, Statues, and Tutelary Powers ; of Ghosts, Specters, Oracles, Magick, and Judiciary Astrology ; with the Reasons how People came to imagine that Heaven (or the Palace of the Good) was over their Heads, and that Hell (or the Prison of the Wicked) was under their Feet ; why they look up when they pray, and several other things of this nature, for which it's generally imagin'd no account can be given besides Custom, or that in the Abyss of Time, and under the Ruins of proper Monuments, such Originals are irrecoverably bury'd. Reasons are likewise given in this Letter for the principal of the Heathen Rites, the odd Descriptions they have made of their Deitys, the ungodlike Histories they relate of their Actions, and other Particularitys which have bin long regarded as the Fictions of Poets, or the Extravagancys of human Imagination, but

## The Preface.

but no way to be probably reduc'd to the  
Exactness of History. And last of all  
is explain'd the threefold Division of the  
Heathen Theology into Natural, Civil,  
and Poetical, with the Allegorical Inter-  
pretation of their Mysterys, and a Pa-  
rallel of their Practices with the Cor-  
ruptions of Christianity; whereby it ap-  
pears that in all Ages Superstition is  
actually the same, however the Names of  
it may vary. This third is the longest  
of all the Letters, but you'll think it  
impossible that in so short a one any  
Satisfaction can be given concerning so  
many different Subjects as I have already  
nam'd, not to insist on what I have not  
time to mention: and therefore you are  
to suppose that I don't empty common  
places here, and deliver all that may be  
said on each of these Heads (which I have  
bin far from doing) but only all that's  
strictly necessary to make 'em very cer-  
tain, easy, and intelligible to a Lady,  
and consequently to all Capacities. This

is

## The Preface.

is not an Argument therefore that I have no more Reasons or Authorities left to defend what may be reckon'd dangerous Paradoxes, by such as are mortally afraid if they are led but one step out of the common Road, tho but to make their way shorter and safer, or to walk upon Carpet Downs, instead of wandering guideless thro a Wilderness, over Lakes and Morasses, among dreadful Rocks and Precipices.

13. YOU'll wonder, I believe, that I shou'd differ so much both about the Origin and Progress of Idolatry, with one whose Book on this very Subject I have so lately recommended to you under an advantageous Character; I mean the most faithful and laborious Antiquary, *Ant. Ward*  
ANTONY VANDER AAR, principal Physician to the City of Harlem. My Opinion of that Book is still the same, only that (as I then told you) instead of the Origin and Progress of Idolatry, which might so have been indicated,  
which  
C A

## The Preface.

A compleat Collection of the most  
antient Heathen, Jewish, and  
Christian Superstitions : for these  
things are in that Book very accurately  
describ'd, but little said of their Origin,  
or nothing contrary to my Authorities,  
except what I have consulted about  
the Worship of the Celestial Bodys;  
and the Progress of Idolatry from Chal-  
dea to Syria and other Parts of Asia,  
particularly to Ionia, thence to Greece,  
and soon, barely suppos'd, but not of-  
fer'd to be prov'd, as may be seen in the  
second and third Chapters of the first  
Dissertation, where the Subject is indeed  
but incidentally hinted. Nor do I ques-  
tion but that learned Gentleman will pre-  
fer good Authority, tho' not commonly  
taken notice of, to a vulgar Error, tho'  
generally approv'd. Mr. VANDALE'S  
History of the Heathen Oracles you have  
already perus'd with great Satisfaction.  
He has lately publish'd eleven Disserta-  
tions relating chiefly to the Sacred Func-  
tions of the Heathens, wherein from  
Medals,

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Medals, Inscriptions, and Passages of Authors, vast Discoverys are made in Antiquity. He has at present in the Press a Consutation of the pretended ARISTEAS, and consequently the History of the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, falsely attributed to the seventy Interpreters. In the same Volume he treats of the ancient Rites of Purification and Regeneration, as Washings, Sprinklings, Immersions, by Water, by Blood, and the like; whence we are to expect many curious Circumstances relating to Christian Baptism, deliver'd not only with the greatest Freedom, but also with the utmost Fairness: for tho Mr. VANDALE be by Profession a Mennonist, or (as we term them) an Anabaptist, yet he's one of the most passionate Lovers of Truth, as well as of his Friends, that I ever knew; of a large Soul notwithstanding his narrow Fortune, and of nobler Thoughts than to be a Bigot to any thing against plain

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## The Preface.

plain Reason. or Authority.

14. I HAVE written other Letters to SERENA, and concerning matters much more curious; but not having yet transcrib'd 'em fair, I send you instead of them two Philosophical Letters, written to Gentlemen altogether unknown to you. The first, being the fourth in the Pacquet, was sent to an excessive Admirer of SPINOSA, one wholly addicted to his Principles, and reputed the best of any to understand his System. After having disputed together at several times on several Heads, I told him once, en passant, that the whole Fabrick of that Philosophy was without any solid Foundation; of which he laying immediate hold, wou'd never let me be quiet, till getting leisure enough in a lovely Country Retirement, I wrote this Letter. Being a Person of extraordinary Candor, he freely acknowledg'd SPINOSA

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SA to be defective in that point, and consequently in all that depended on it; tho he had never observ'd so much before, and some other Spinosists show'd the same Ingenuity. But a Gentleman, no less illustrious for his excellent Learning than his noble Family, having got a sight of what they stil'd the Confutation of SPINOSA, and which they handed one to another, he bestow'd many Commendations (not fit for me to repeat) on that part of the Letter which directly regarded that Philosopher: but express'd his Dislike of the latter part, wherein I declar'd my own Opinion, that Motion is essential to Matter no less than Extension, and that Matter neither ever was nor ever can be a sluggish, dead, and inactive Lump, or in a State of absolute Repose. To the several Objections he was pleas'd to make, I return'd distinct Answers in the second Letter, which is the fifth and last in

## The Preface.

the Parquet. For the Apologys I make about maintaining a Notion so flatly opposite both to the Antients and Moderns, I refer you to the Letter it self, where you'll likewise be convinc'd that my Opinion is not chargeable with any of those ill Consequences, to which at first sight it may seem obnoxious. I shall not anticipate your own Observation with relation to what important Uses it may serve in Philosophy, since the Question ought not to be how convenient, but how true it is: nor will I excuse my writing of the Mysterys of Philosophy in so plain a Style, being sorry I had not time enough to render those things much more common and intelligible, it being a great deal easier to deliver 'em in the ordinary Terms of Art; but then fewer are left Judges of the Controversy, and the Subject made less useful or entertaining. I hope, if Dr. COWARD (whose last Book I have lately perus'd)

happens

## The Preface.<sup>T</sup>

happens to see this Letter, that he will not assert it \* to be evidently plain that Motion is not Matter, tho if we come to define it, *say* he, we can hardly find Words to express its Quiddity by: for I fancy I have made it very clear, that Motion is but Matter under a certain Consideration, tho it does not imply or exhaust the whole Idea of Matter, no more than Extension does. One that saw (as he professes to do †) the Possibility of God's endowing Matter with self-movent Principles, will no longer hold it to be philosophically impossible: nor maintain that || it does not always exert itself from some latent and unknown Reasons of the Divine Wisdom; and these Reasons he gues-

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\* Grand Essay, p. 74.

† Ibid. Preface.

|| Ibid. p. 153.

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*ses may be \* to preserve the Order and Frame of the Universe, which (he thinks) shou'd all Matter start up into Self-motion, wou'd necessarily be destroy'd, and therefore God has thought fit, to restrain it. When he considers my Arguments, he'll find no such danger to the Universe, as he apprehends, from Matter's constant Exercise of its essential Action: and indeed it wou'd be a Contradiction that Motion was essential to Matter, and yet that only some Parts of Matter, and on certain occasions, were endow'd with a power of moving themselves; whereas Matter may as well be sometimes without Extension as without Motion, if there be any weight in my Allegations; tho neither this, nor that, nor any other particular Direction of its Motion be essential to*

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\* Id. ib.

## The Preface.

it, but left to the ordinary Determinations of the mutual Action of Bodys on one another, or to the immediate Power and most wise Purpose of Almighty God. But to say that God may take Motion from Matter, tho it were essential to it, is to say, that he can deprive it of Extension or Solidity; and this is to say, that he can make it no Matter.

15. ACCORDING to the liberty I gave you before, you may indifferently show these Letters to all your Acquaintance that are curious of such things, without inquiring whether they be Friends or Foes to me, whether they be Whigs or Torys, Latitudinarians or Precisians, Occasional Conformists or Nonjurant Schismatics: for there's nothing in this Pacquet relating to the Disputes which divide 'em at present either in Religion or Politics, nothing but what may be read without  
Passion

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Passion by those of all Partys, Sects, and Factions. These are only innocent Researches into the venerable Ruins of Antiquity, or short Essays in Philosophy, not calculated to offend any, but to please all; and to divert, if they are not capable to instruct. As for those who are jealous of every thing, they are sufficiently punish'd in having their Censures valud by no body; and (as we use to quiet froward Children) to neglect their Complaints, and not to humour their Pettishness, is the most certain way of silencing those peevish Knights Errant, who are always in search of new Adventures, and make every one they encounter a Giant or a Dwarf. It were an effectual Method indeed to discourage all Improvements in Learning, all further Progress in Knowledge or Politeness, if Men could be deter'd from presenting the World with the Opinions, Manners, Religions, or Governments of the Antients, lest  
any

## The Preface.

any of the *Moderns* shou'd fancy their own Personages to be acted under this Disguize : nor will I deny but Applications of this kind may sometimes be very naturally made, tho a Writer had never thought or intended such a thing, which I declare to be my present Disposition, except where I have directly exprest the Comparison ; but such Inferences are much easier drawn by the People concern'd, who must needs perceive the best of any, what has the greatest Resemblance with their own Doctrins or Practices. Now in this Case there remains, in my judgment, but one of these two things ; either to reject what they themselves defend, if it be no better grounded than what they condemn in the *Antients*, and that perhaps it has from thence its very Original : or else to get a Law enacted, that People must not be told what the *Antients* believ'd, and that the *Moderns* never copy'd any thing from them but what was absolutely use-  
ful

### The Preface.

know, of that peculiar Temper, that they cannot live, if they are not bespattering one or other ; and if it be necessary for their Health, or that their Constitution requires this Discharge of their Choler, we ought no more to blame them, than we find others regard what they say. As for the Character of a Low Churchman, which you sent me, and such other Authors, who notwithstanding my Absence, or not intermeddling in their Controversys, and considering the Satisfaction I gave in Vindicius Liberius concerning the Exceptions taken at Christianity not Mysterious, yet have wire-drawn my Name into their irreligious Invectives, and wou'd needs honor me with their Abuses in so good Company, as that of our most venerable Prelates ; who, in short, have us'd the same Language since my Silence and Compliance as before ; 'tis plainly evident, that all their Pretences  
were

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were as hypocritical as their Charity is narrow, that they were never acted by Zeal for my Soul, but Malice against my Person, not out of Concern for the Church, but to gratify a Faction, and some of 'em to be rewarded for petty Services, who can never expect Preferment by greater. These are the men who occasion'd that Scandal on the Clergy, that they never forgive; but God forbid that a great Body should be chargeable with the Offences of a few, who scribble without their Consent. He shall at any time have my Thanks, and not my Displeasure, who treats me with no more Respect than our never to be forgotten Deliverer from Slavery and the inimitable Stator of our Liberty, King WILLIAM; who gives me no better Quarter than to so considerable a Body of Protestants and good Subjects as the English Dissenters; and who shows no more Tenderness to me, than to all the moderate Members of the establish'd Church.

M

Candor

MILITARY

## The Preface.

Church. But that Person has pleas'd so very few by his furious and intemperate way of writing, not to speak of his want of Knowledge as well as want of Civility, and indeed the very Design of his Libel was so extremely wicked, to oppress some, and to divide us all, that without regard to him or those of his Kidney, I may venture to declare my self a Low Churchman at home, and an Occasional Conformist with the Protestants here abroad.

17. **HAVING** so well prepar'd you before for reading the following Dissertations, without any Rub or Obstacle in your way, I shall release you and my self from any further Trouble at present, only assuring you that I long to see you (which I hope to do very shortly) as much as any Man in England, and that I am as much your humble Servant.

LETTER

## LETTER I.

*The Origin and Force  
of Prejudices.*

**Y**OU greatly complain, MADAM, that you are still a Captive to several Prejudices; and I wonder more how you came to get rid of so many. You'll be easily comforted, and entertain a better Opinion of your self, when you seriously consider in what a miserable Condition all men are born, and how impossible it is for them not to be educated in Error; how difficult to get free from their Prepossessions in ripen Age, and how dangerous to do it, when they become well-dispos'd by the Discovery of Truth.

B

e. NOW,

**Letter**

**2.** NOW, since you are pleas'd to desire it, I shall briefly trace this Subject from the beginning, showing by what degrees our Prejudices grow, and what additional strength they incessantly receive in their course. We all partake but too much of the Inclinations of those that give us Life, and of the Passions that are predominant in the Blood of the Family: and if our Features and Actions were not infallible Arguments, that we are subject to receive good or bad Impressions in the Womb; yet the extraordinary Marks which we sometimes bear, occasion'd by the Longing of our Mothers, or by some other Accident (which they often remember) afford a sufficient Proof that the Foundation of our Prejudices is very strongly laid before we are born. The Temperament we receive in the first Formation, gives not only a Disposition to this or that particular Humor and Habit; but also a visible Bias to most Actions of our future Lives, which is not to be cur'd but by the utmost Efforts and Exercise of Reason.

**3.** WE no sooner see the Light, but the grand Cheat begins to delude us from

from every Quarter. The very Mid- Letter  
wife hands us into the World with super- I.  
stitious Ceremonys, and the good Wo-  
men assisting at the Labor have a thou-  
sand Spells to avert the Misfortune, or  
to procure the Happinels of the Infant ;  
making several ridiculous Observations,  
to discover the Omen of his future State  
of Life. Nor is the Priest in some pla-  
ces behind-hand with these Gossips, to  
initiate him betimes into his Service,  
by pronouncing certain Forms of Words  
as so many powerful Charms, and using  
the gentle Symbols of Salt or Oil, or  
the severer Applications of Iron or Fire,  
or by marking him after some other  
manner, as his own Right and Property  
for the future. The Child, it's true, is  
not yet affected by any of these or the  
like Foolerys, whatever Virtue he may  
be afterwards persuaded to allow them :  
but this shows how early those about  
him begin to infect him (if they cou'd)  
with their own mistakes, and how in-  
dustriously every one with whom he has  
afterwards to do, endeavours to deprave  
his Reason from the very beginning ;  
so that not remembring when, or where,  
or how he came by many of his No-  
tions, he's tempted to believe that they  
proceed from Nature it self, and is asto-

Letter nish'd to find that any shou'd call the  
 I. Truth of 'em in question; as it will  
 more evidently appear from the following Reflections.

4. W E are presently after our Birth deliver'd to Nurses, ignorant Women of the meanest Vulgar, who infuse into us their Errors with their Milk, frightening us into quiet with the menaces of Rawhead and Bloody-bones, Buggle-bows and Bullbeggars. And lest we shou'd be lost by wandring abroad, or drop into Wells or Rivers, they terrify us with storys of Spirits and Hobgoblins, making us believe that all lonesome places are haunted, and that the invisible Powers are principally active and mischievous in the night-time. What is thus invented at the beginning to keep Children under Government (a Government that indeed makes 'em miserable Slaves ever after) is believ'd by them in good earnest when they grow older, whereby the whole Generation and Country comes to be perswaded of it at last, and this to such a degree, that many People (otherwise prudent enough) dare not sleep alone in a Chamber, nor travel but by Day-light, much less have they the courage to enter into

into empty Houses or Churches.

Letter

I.

5. FROM our Nurses we are brought home, where we are still put into worse hands among idle and ignorant Servants, whose chiefest Entertainments are Discourses of Fairys, Elves, Witchcrafts, walking Ghosts, Fortune-telling, consulting Astrologers, or such other chimerical Doings; delighting to fright and delude one another, not seldom to carry on their private Intrigues: which things, however intended, never fail to make fatal impressions on the Children: and for the most part our Parents are not wiser.

6. THEN we are sent out to School, where all the Youth come equally infected from home, and hear of nothing there but Dæmons, Nymphs, Genii, Satyrs, Fauns, Apparitions, Prophecys, Transformations, and other stupendous Miracles. We tell all our stories over again among our selves; and what may be conceal'd from a Child in a prudent Family, he's sure to hear of it at School, where so many Children are brought together, not to improve one another (which cannot be suppos'd of such Conversation) but to communicate their

Letter. mutual Mistakes and vicious Habits, to

I. grow the more idle, and to meet with  
 bad Examples. We greedily devour  
 the Poets, Orators, and Mythologists,  
 committing great Extracts of their  
 Fictions to our memory, being sur-  
 priz'd and gain'd by the Charms of their  
 Stile, Numbers, and Composition ;  
 whereby it comes to pass that we swal-  
 low the Poison of their Errors with  
 inexpressible Pleasure, and lay a large  
 Foundation for future Credulity, insen-  
 sibly acquiring a Disposition for hearing  
 things rare and wonderful, to imagin-  
 we believe what we only dread or desire,  
 to think when we are but puzzl'd that  
 we are convinc'd, and to swallow what  
 we cannot comprehend.

7. WE are made little wiser, tho  
 much more vain and conceited in the  
 Universitys, especially abroad, where  
 the Professors (right or wrong) must  
 accommodate all things to the Laws  
 and the Religion of the Country : or, if  
 they steal sometimes into the Liberty of  
 Philosophizing, they generally run into  
 Extremes, either making us trust too  
 little or too much to our Senses, or  
 amusing us with illusory Abstractions,  
 and Subtilty which refine the Subject  
 out

\*

out of our View, reducing it at last to mere nothing. The University is the most fertile Nursery of Prejudices, whereof the greatest is, that we think there to learn every thing, when in reality we are taught nothing; only we talk by Rote with mighty assurance the precarious Notions of our Systems; which if deny'd by another, we have not a word further to say out of our common Road, nor any Arguments left, to satisfy the Opposer or our selves. But our comfort is, that we know as much as our Masters, who affect to speak a barbarous Jargon which commonly has no Signification; and the main Art that fits their Disciples to take their Degrees, is to treat of very ordinary Matters in very extraordinary Terms. Yet this dos not render them half so insupportable to People of Sense, as their formal Stiffness and Pedantry, their perpetual Itch of Dispute and Contradiction. I purposely forbear saying any thing of the Advantage commonly taken there from the Inexperience of the Youth (who must naturally rely on the Judgment of their Teachers) to ingage 'em betimes to different Partys and Factions, to Sourness, Cenforiousness, and Bigotry: for, in one word, there

Letter is scarce any thing learnt at the University, but what a man must forget, if he would be understood, or not appear ridiculous and troublesome, when he comes into other Company.

8. BUT as if all this were not enough to corrupt our Understandings, there are certain Persons hir'd and set apart in most Communitys of the World, not to undeceive, but to retain the rest of the People in their Mistakes. This will be counted a hard Saying, but it cannot concern the Orthodox Clergy: and of other Priests what can there be more certain, since 'tis for this very reason they are counted Heterodox? The strange things and amazing storys we have read or heard (if of any Concern to a particular Religion) are daily confirm'd to us by the Preacher from the Pulpit, where all he says is taken for Truth by the greatest part of the Auditory, no body having the liberty to contradict him, and he giving out his own Concepts for the very Oracles of God. Tho every Sect will deny this of its peculiar Doctrines (and that we know it, SERENA, to be false of the Reform'd Religion which we profess) yet the rest affirm it with undeniable

nable Arguments of one another; for it is impossible they shou'd be all or above one of 'em in the right, which is a Demonstration that the rest, being the bulk of Mankind, are retain'd in their Mistakes by their Priests. And nevertheless the very Doubts about the Joys of Heaven and the Torments of Hell, are enough to procure Authority for their infinite Contradictions: so strong are the Impressions of Hope and Fear, which yet are ever founded in Ignorance!

9. WHEN we come abroad into the World, we find all those Errors to be in so high a Credit, that every one is gaz'd on as a Monster, who is out of this universal Mode: or if by some lucky chance we shou'd happen to be undeceiv'd, yet the prevailing Power of Interest will make us hypocritically (or, if you please, prudently) to pretend the contrary, for fear of losing our Fortunes, Quiet, Reputation, or Lives. This confirms others in their Prejudices by our example, as much as if we were deceiv'd our selves; for knowing nothing of our Minds but by our outward Actions, which appear so like their own, they judg us to be of the

Letter the same Persuasion. Besides, that to

I.  maintain we are in the Right, while others are in the Wrong, will be interpreted such an Affront to all other People, as a Man wou'd not venture to be guilty of who knows Mankind, and is resolv'd to lead an easy Life far from the Noise, and Crowd, and Hurry of the World.

10. THOSE who are more in love with the Bustle of the Publick, or more under a Necessity to endure it, generally betake themselves to some Profession. This indispensably engages 'em to many Prejudices in favor of their particular Calling, which if all of 'em do not always believe, yet they find it their interest that others shou'd do so, to gain with them the greater Credit, Reputation, and Authority. CATO the Cenfor wonder'd, that when one Augur met another, they did not laugh at the Simplicity of those who believ'd their Divinations; and if they had done so among themselves (as we know from History they often did) yet they wou'd never the sooner expose the Craft of their Order to the People, who thought 'em the infallible News-mongers of Heaven, and who paid 'em so well for their  
their

*of Prejudices.*

11

their Intelligence. Hence not only every Profession, but also every Rank of Men, have their particular Language, which is thought by others to contain very extraordinary Matters, much above the common Capacity or Comprehension. The Nobility, Country-Gentlemen, Jockys, and Beaus, have as well their several Cants (tho not so barbarous) as the Divines, the Lawyers, Physicians, and Philosophers. Except the few wise and cunning, all the rest are really persuaded that they are far greater Men than such as are ignorant of their Terms; and I have many times seen a Hunter as much despise the good Sense of those who did not understand his noisy Jargon, as an Astrologer very proud of illuminating the credulous Mob with that vile Stuff, which he did not so much as understand himself. In most Professions (especially in those they repute Mechanick) the Members are sworn not to discover the Mystery of their Trade, which very Notion of Mystery makes others imagin that there's something extraordinary in very trivial matters thus artfully disguiz'd; and your Mysterys of State (tho not to be pry'd into by vulgar Eyes, but to be admir'd with Veneration) are sometimes

Letter

I.



Letter times as airy and imaginary, as flight  
I. and ridiculous as any others.



11. BUT no sort of Prejudices stick closer to us, or are harder to be eradicated, than those of the Society wherein we live and had our Education. This holds equally true of their civil Customs and religious Rites, of their Notions and Practices. We cannot easily be brought to believe that our Ancestors were mostly in the wrong, much less that those with whom we daily converse have so little ground for many of their Actions: especially since we are as apt to love, or to admire the Opinions of Men as we do their Persons, and that we are bred in the same Persuasion as well as they. On the contrary likewise, we frequently hate the Opinion for the sake of the Person, and not less frequently the Person for the sake of his Opinion; commonly for no better reason, than that we were differently bred, and accusom'd to think that one who errs in his Notions cannot be right in his Practice. Thus the Body of the People in all Places of the World do greedily imbibe whatever they are taught to imitate or to respect from their Infancy, and without further Evidence

dence are ready to die for the Truth Letter  
of it in old Age; which is to become I.  
properly Martyrs to a Habit, but not  
to Religion or Truth, unless by mere  
Accident. Nay, Custom (which is  
not unfitly call'd a second Nature) has  
imprest such a Stamp on the very Lan-  
guage of the Society, that what is de-  
liver'd in these or those Words, tho  
ever so contradictory or abstruse, passes  
ordinarily for current Truth: but change  
your Terms, or use the Expressions of  
any other Party, and then if you speak  
Oracles, whatever you say is reputed  
false, or at best suspected. And indeed  
it cannot well be otherwise, since these  
Prejudices of all others must never be  
examin'd. You may reason your self  
(for example) into what Religion you  
please; but, pray, what Religion will  
permit you to reason your self out of  
it? I know some of 'em profess to al-  
low a Liberty of examining, but their  
Proceedings not seldom show their want  
of Sincerity: for let any of their Doc-  
trines be call'd in doubt or deny'd after  
such an Examination, and the Person  
that does it will pass his time very ill.  
If he's not put to Death, sent into Ban-  
ishment, depriv'd of his Employ-  
ments, fin'd, or excommunicated; ac-  
cording

**Letter** cording as his Church has more or less  
**I.** Power; yet the least he may expect, is  
 ~~~~~ to be abhorr'd and shun'd by the other  
 Members of the Society (a thing in all  
 People's power) which every Man has  
 not Fortitude enough to bear for the  
 sake of the greatest Truths; and the very  
 Dearness of Acquaintance has often re-  
 tain'd Men of admirable Understanding,  
 in the external Profession of the most  
 absurd and ridiculous Errors.

12. **ADD** to all this our own Fears  
 and Vanity; our Ignorance of Things  
 past, the Uncertainty of the present  
 Time, and our solicitous Curiosity a-  
 bout what's to come; our Precipitation  
 in judging, our Inconsiderateness in  
 assenting, and want of due Suspension  
 in examining: which makes us not  
 only be carry'd away by vulgar Errors  
 in our Practice, to be misled by our  
 Senses as well as by our Appetites, and  
 to take numberless Falsitys for demon-  
 strated Truths in matters of Specula-  
 tion; but likewise to be unjust to the  
 Merit of others, to confound the Inno-  
 cent with the Guilty, and generally to  
 prefer the latter. And, as our Preju-  
 dices govern us, 'tis next to impossible  
 we should ever truly discern who is the  
 innocent

innocent or guilty Person, who has got **Letter**  
the better or the worse of any Cause; **I.**  
since our first Question is not what a   
Man has done or how, but who or  
whence he is? being ready to approve  
or condemn, to read over his Book or to  
throw it away, according to the Faction  
or Party he espouses. This surely is nei-  
ther fair nor manly dealing: and I hope  
no body will pretend that it is the way  
to discover Truth, no more than to con-  
tinue steadfast in the Profession of it;  
since it's hard to conceive (for exam-  
ple) by what means a Man can quit the  
Alcoran if he must never read the  
Bible; or if a Mahometan ought to read  
the Bible, I see no reason a Christian  
shou'd fear to read the Alcoran; which  
is as true of all the Books in the World.  
It were superfluous to speak any thing  
more at large of such common Places  
as our predominant Passions, the Con-  
tagion of the consenting Multitude, or  
the Authority of our most mighty Mas-  
ter, the irresistible Tyrant Custom,  
which equally rules over Princes,  
Priests, and People.

13. **AFTER** these Observations  
we may perceive the perillous Condition  
of every particular Man, and how im-  
possible

**Better** possible it appears for him to escape Inflection, to obtain or to preserve his Liberty; since all the other men of the World are agreed in the same Conspiracy to deceive him. But tho a Person exempt from Prejudices seems in his outward Circumstances to have little advantage over others; yet the cultivating of his Reason will be the chief Study of his Life, when on the one hand he considers that nothing can equal his inward Quiet and Joy, seeing almost all the rest of his kind ever groveling in the dark, lost in inextricable Mazes, agitated with innumerable Doubts, tormented with perpetual Fears, and not sure to find any End of their Misery even in Death: while, on the other hand, he himself is wholly secur'd by a right use of his Understanding against all these vain Dreams and terrible Phantoms, content with what he already knows, and pleas'd with new Discoverys, without thinking himself concern'd in things inscrutable; not led like a Beast by Authority or Passion, but giving Law to his own Actions as a free and reasonable Man.

14. I AM as sensible as any in the World, SERENA, how little you need that I shou'd further enlarge on this Subject, you having already so much Knowledg and so few Prejudices, reasoning so exactly, thinking so nicely, and speaking so justly. Nor is it for your Instruction (I confess) that I have written now at your Desire, but to show you how much we agree in our Opinions; tho I am ready to acknowledge that you exceed most men as well as my self in Quickness of Understanding, as you do all your own Sex by your many excellent Qualitys. In the matter of Prejudices, you see that at least you are not in a worse state than other Persons; or if your Circumstances are better (as I'm sure they are) nevertheless you must be content with the inward Pleasure and Satisfaction of your own Mind, and not expect the Applause of the Publick, which wou'd rather expose you to Disgrace or Danger, than do Justice to your incomparable Virtues. But this ought not to hinder your injoying the Happiness of free Discourse with any Persons worthy of this Honor, whom you shall find to have as much Judgment and Dis-

Letter creation in reasoning, as I have Zeal  
I. and Sincerity in professing my self,  
MADAM, to be your most faithful  
humble Servant.

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LETTER

## LETTER II.

*The History of the Soul's  
Immortality among the  
Heathens.*

**I**F the best Religion ought to be distinguish'd by the Purity and Integrity of its Morals, as well as by the Truth and Usefulness of its Doctrins, I am not acquainted with any body more sincerely pious than you, M A D A M; which is a Testimony that all those, who have the Happiness to be acquainted with you, will readily grant to your Virtue. You have no Doubts, I'm certain, about the Soul's Immortality, and Christianity affords the best, the clearest Demonstration for it, even the Revelation of God himself. But you have often admir'd, you say, how the Heathens came by

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the

**Letter** the Discovery of this Truth, since  
**II.** they had no such Revelation from Heaven, and that what is so confidently said of their learning it from the antient Books of the Jews, may be as easily deny'd as affirm'd; besides that it is altogether groundless, no such thing plainly appearing in these Books themselves, tho it be manifest from the Pentateuch and the Series of other History, that many Nations had their several Religions and Governments long before the Law was deliver'd to the Israelites. The same holds as true of the pretended Preaching of ABRAHAM, and of the Tradition of the Sons of NOAH; these being as destitute of any Evidence from matter of Fact, as in their Circumstances utterly improbable. To have therefore the pleasure, MADAM, of doing a Thing which you signify will be very agreeable to you, I shall lay this Subject before you as it appears to my self, not from Conjectures and Suppositions, which give no body any real Conviction, however they may silence or amuse; but I shall argue from unbiass'd Reasons, and the greatest Consent of antient Writers.

Letter

II.

2. TO Persons less knowing and unprejudic'd than S E R E N A, it would sound strange perhaps to hear me speak of the Soul's Immortality, as of an Opinion, which, like some others in Philosophy, had a Beginning at a certain time, or from a certain Author who was the Inventor thereof, and which was favour'd or oppos'd as Peoples Persuasion, Interest, or Inclination led 'em. But so it was among the Heathens, whatever you may think of the matter; and I have sometimes consider'd with astonishment the weakness of those, who, contrary to their own Experience, seem'd afraid to acknowledg so much: as if the nature of the thing cou'd suffer any detriment from the Errors of others about it; or as if the Heathens had not entertain'd as extravagant Faneys about the very Being of God, and all the other Articles of our Religion, which no body takes to be any Argument against the Truth of them.

3. NOW tho the Egyptian Priests, the Chaldean Magi, and the Indian Brachmans have disputed among themselves about the Honor of this In-

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vention

Letter II. vention (no less than those of Harlem and Mentz about the beginning of Printing, and those of China and Europe about the Origin of Artillery as well as of Printing, and other Nations about other Arts. or Opinions) yet it is expressly asserted by ARISTOTLE, and agreed by the generality of Writers as an uncontroverted Truth, that the most antient Greek Philosophers did not dream of any Principle or actuating Spirit in the Universe it self, no more than in any of the Parts thereof: but explain'd all the Phænomena of Nature by Matter and local Motion, Levity and Gravity, or the like; and rejected all that the Poets said of the Gods, Dæmons, Souls, Ghosts, Heaven, Hell, Visions, Prophecys, and Miracles, as Fables invented at pleasure, and Fictions to divert their Readers. After THALES, ANAXIMANDER, ANAXIMENES, and others had thus taught the Universe to be infinite, and Matter to be eternal, tho the Forms thereof were changeable, comes ANAXAGORAS (as it is unanimously own'd

MAXIMANDER

P22, 31

Τὸν δὲ πρῶτον φιλοσοφῶντα διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ αἰδῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀρχὴν ἐκείνην. Metaph. I. 1.

by

by

by almost all Authors Heathen or Letter  
 Christian) and to this Matter adds another Principle, which he call'd the **MIND**, as the Mover and Disposer of the same: whereupon from so curious, so new, and strange an Invention he was firnam'd the **MIND**, some deriding and others admiring him for this Notion. We shall presently show how he came by this Discovery, tho most of those that preceded him made infinite Matter the Principle of all things. 'Tis true that **THALES** maintain'd Matter to be essentially Water, as **ANAXIMENES** affirm'd it to be Air; and that by various Rarefactions and Condensations all things were form'd out of these Elements, and resolv'd into them again: but the meaning of both is, that the Particles of Matter are extremely subtil and in perpetual motion like Air or

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\* Aristot. Metaph. l. 1. Plato in Phædone. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. Diogen. Laert. in Anaxag. Plutarch. in Pericle, & in placit. Philos. l. 1. Tertul. de Anima. Clem. Alex. Stromat. l. 2. Euseb. de Præp. Evang. l. 14. August. de Civ. Dei, l. 8. Themist. Orat. 15. Etiam Proclus, Simplicius, cum multis aliis, tam Gentilibus quam Christianis.

\* Diogen. Laert. in Anaxag. Suidas in Anaxagora. Plutarch. in Pericle.

Letter Water; from which Motion, and the

II. Infinity of the Universe, the whole  
 ~~~~~ Tribe of Philosophers (as we said just  
 now) accounted for all the Phenomena  
 of Nature, till ANAXAGORAS ad-  
 ded the moving and ordering Mind.

4. ONE would think that a Person,  
 who deserv'd so well of the Greeks,  
 shou'd have met with suitable Rewards  
 and Applause; but whether it be that  
 the other Philosophers envy'd him, or  
 that they wish'd there was no Spirit,  
 or that he did not sufficiently answer  
 their Objections, or whatever were the  
 reason, 'tis certain that he was unfor-  
 tunate in his Reputation at that time  
 and ever since, having bin very ill us'd  
 by all Partys, for no cause that I can  
 see, but that he did not fully come up  
 to any of them. Some assert that he  
 did not understand the corpuscular Phi-  
 losophy, and that he espous'd the Opi-  
 nion of the separate Mind (for he was  
 not the Author of it) to save him-  
 self the labor of understanding Me-  
 chanicks, of making long Deductions  
 and accurate Observations, or prying  
 into the Nature of Things. And as a  
 Confirmation of this, they tell you  
 that in other Matters his Imagination  
 was

was very gross, witness his teaching Letted  
 that the Sun was little bigger than the II.  
 Peninsula of Peloponnesus; that the  
 Earth was flat, and not round; that  
 the Firmament was made of Stones,  
 which were kept from falling by their  
 swift Rotation; that in Generation  
 the Males came from the Mother's right  
 Side, and the Females from her left;  
 that Snow was black; and that the Par-  
 ticles of all things, as of Blood, or  
 Bones, or Gold, or Milk, were already  
 form'd and existent from Eternity, but  
 that they constituted Blood, or Gold,  
 Black or Green, as it happen'd that a  
 sufficient Number of them were brought  
 together into one Body, so as greatly to  
 surpass the Particles of any other sort,  
 which Opinion the Greeks express by  
 the Word *Homomeria*. They further  
 laugh'd at him for leaving his Grounds  
 to the discretion of his Sheep, that he  
 might be the more at leisure for the  
 Study of Astronomy, in which his  
 System of the Sun and the Stones of  
 the Firmament shows he was a wonder-

<sup>1</sup> Vide Diog. Laert. in Anaxagora, & ad eum Anno-  
 tates.

<sup>2</sup> Diogen. Laert. in Anaxagora, Sta. 10. 1. 1.

Letter II. Opinion of him, and the great Dr. BURNET (in his 'Archæology') says that his Sirname of the Mind is far more honorable than those of Africanus and Asiaticus: nor did ANAXAGORAS fail of setting a just Value on his own Worth; for after his Exile (whether for Atheism in ungodding the Planets, or for Treason in conspiring with PERICLES) when some body told him that he was depriv'd of the Athenians, he immediately answer'd, *not I of them, but they of me.*

5. PHERECYDES of the Island Syrus, as we are inform'd by CICERO and others, was the first among the Greek Philosophers that committed the Immortality of human Souls to writing: for tho THALES is said to have bin of the same Opinion, yet he publish'd nothing; and MAXIMUS TYRIUS

<sup>1</sup> L. I. c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laertius in Anaxagora; *ε μιν, αλλα ουκ εστιν.*

<sup>3</sup> Credo equidem etiam alios; sed (quod Litteris extat) Pherecydes Syrius primus dixit Animas Humanum esse sempiternas. Hanc Opinionem Diogenes ejus Pythagoras maxime confirmavit. *Thes. Quest. l. I.*

<sup>4</sup> *Επειδ ουκ εστιν αλλος κρησιν κρησιν ουκ εστιν αλλος κρησιν κρησιν.* Diogenes Laertius in Thales.

(in his twenty eighth Dissertation) affirms with C I C E R O that P Y T H A G O R A S the Samian, the Disciple of P H E R E C Y D E S, 'was the first among the Greeks who durst openly maintain that the Body only dy'd, but that the Soul was immortal, neither subject to Age nor Corruption, and that it existed before it came hither. You see, it was so great an Innovation, that he was reckon'd a bold Man, who had Courage enough to vent it. Afterwards P L A T O and the rest greedily imbrac'd this Doctrine; and we know how widely the Grecians cou'd spread it by their numberless Colonys in Asia, in Italy, in Sicily, in Gaule, and other Parts of the World, as well as by their Poets, Orators, Historians, and Philosophers, whose Works were so much admir'd by other Nations for their Subtlity, Politeness, and Learning.

6. BUT the next Question is, whence A N A X A G O R A S and his Followers (who pretended to no divine Revelations) borrow'd this Invention.

Πυθαγόρας δὲ ὁ Σάμιος πρῶτος ἐν τοῖς Ἕλλησι  
ψυλισμὸν εἶπε, ὅτι εὖτε τοῦ μὲν σώματος τὸ πνέον, ὃ  
δὲ ψυχῆς ἀκαταμάχητος ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀσφραγίστος, καὶ  
καὶ οὕτως αὐτὴν πάλιν πάλιν δίδω.

It

**Letter II** It is evident from antient Monuments that he and the other Philosophers of his side, with the Poets and Mythologists, learnt it partly from the Magi, when the Persians transported their Arms into Greece, and partly from the Priests of Egypt when they travel'd for Knowledge into that Country. **THALES** had his Philosophy of the Egyptian Priests. **PLATO** was in Egypt a long time, he has a great many of the Egyptian Doctrins in his Works, and is acknowledg'd by all to have learnt of them and of their Disciple **PYTHAGORAS** as well as of the Persian Magi, whatever he has deliver'd about the Immortality of the Soul, the different Mansions of the Just and Unjust in a future State, the Expiations of Crimes, the Lakes and Rivers, the Meadows, Caves, and Monsters of

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\* Diogen. Laert. in Thalete. Clem. Alexand. Strom. l. 1. Euseb. de Prepar. Evangel. l. 10. Joseph. l. 1. contra Ap.

\* Diod. Sic. l. 1. Cicero l. 5. de Finibus. Lib. de Senectute. Tusc. Quæst. l. 1. Aristot. Metaph. l. 1. Diog. Laert. in Platone. Quintilian. lib. 1. Clem. Alexandrin. in Admonit. ad Gent. Valer. Max. l. 8. Philostrat. vit. Appollon. lib. 1. Hieronymus lib. 2. Ep. 1. ad Paulinum. Lactant. lib. 4. cum multis aliis.

Hell. PYTHAGORAS, one of the greatest Travellers in the World, convers'd with the Chaldean Magi, the Indian Gymnosophists, and particularly with the Egyptian Priests and Prophets, suffering himself to be circumcis'd that he might be admitted to hear the secret Doctrins of the latter, which they wou'd not communicate to him without this Condition. I will not here insist on the Poets, as ORPHEUS, HOMER, or any other of the most antient, who yet are all confess'd to have borrow'd their Fictions from the Egyptians, as may be seen in the first Book of DIODORUS SICULUS. ANAXAGORAS was first taught by the Magi, having bin twenty years of Age at the Expedition of XERXES, and (as DIONYSIUS PHALERBUS relates) he begun to philosophize in Athens at thole Years. He was a Hearer of ANAXIMENES, and (as THEODORET and AMMIANUS MAR-

*What Propter  
I cannot find  
I think. It  
does not seem  
express him  
so variously  
has heard of  
him in the  
before? p. 1*

*p. 22*

\* Herodot. in Thalia. Diod. Sic. l. 1. Cicero de Finibus l. 5. Plin. Hist. Nat. l. 36. etiam lib. 25. Diogen. Laert. in Pythag. Isocrat. in laude Puffridis, & alii passim.

\* Clem. Alex. Theodoret. in Serm. contra Græcos.

\* Diog. Laert. in Anaxagora.

Letter **CHRYSTIANUS** inform us). had travel'd likewise into Egypt; so that we plainly perceive whence he had his Notion of the ordering Mind. The Greeks learnt several things of the Magi in those Days, which afterwards inspir'd others with the Desire of going into those Parts for perfecting their Knowledge.

7. BUT the great Doubt still remains, who were the first Inventors of the Doctrine of Spirits among the Egyptians, the Egyptian Priests, the Chaldean Magi, or the Indian Bramins. **PAUSANIAS** is very positive in favour of the two last: For, says he, *I know the Chaldean and Indian Magi to be the first who affirm'd that the Soul of Man was immortal; and of this they persuaded as well other Greeks, as especially PLATO the Son of ARISTON.* A few more Greeks besides **PAUSANIAS** (and from their Authority some

Theodoret. de Græc. Affect. Scrim. 2. Theodor. Melitenior. Protr. in Astronomiam. Actum. Martii. 1. 22.

Εγω δε Χαλδαιος και Ινδων τις Μαγος ηρξατο ειπε αποκατα, ως ειδωμενος εστιν ανθρωπος ψυχη και σωμα και Ελληνων αλλοι τε επιδιδωσιν, και οτι ηναι Πλατων ο Αειρωνος. Μετταρχει.

of

of the Roman Writers) believ'd the Chaldeans to have bin at least the Inventors of Astrology, if not of the Soul's Immortality. But we might produce an Army of Witnesses, if the things did not speak themselves, to prove that the Chaldeans (to whom the Bramins<sup>1</sup> were Disciples) had all their Learning and Religion, and consequently the Immortality of the Soul, no less than Astrology, from the Egyptians. We cou'd show that MACROBIUS<sup>2</sup> did not exaggerate, when he call'd Egypt *the Mother of the Sciences*, and its Inhabitants *the Parents of all the Arts in Philosophy, the first of all Men that dar'd to search and measure the Heavens, and the only Persons skill'd in all Divine things*; that is to say, the best Divines then in the World. But such a Disquisition not being absolutely ne-

<sup>1</sup> Κλασικός δὲ ὁ Σόλων, ἐν τῷ πρὶς παιδείᾳ, καὶ τῷ γυμναστικῷ ἀπορρῶντες εἶναι τῶν Μάγων φησιν. Diog. Laert. in Proœmio Histor. Philosophorum.

<sup>2</sup> Dies quidem hic intercalaris, antequam quintus Annus incipiat inferendus, cum Ægypti matris Artium ratione consentit. *Saturnal. lib. 1. c. 15.* Plato Ægyptios omnium Philosophiæ Disciplinarum Parentes secutus est. *Somm. Scip. l. 1. c. 19.* Quos constat primos omnium Cœlum scrutari & metiri ausos. *Ibid. c. 21.* Imitatus Ægyptios solos divinarum rerum omnium confcios. *Saturnal. l. 1. c. 14.*

Latter necessary here, we must be content with  
 just what makes for our purpose.

8. THOSE who attributed the Invention of Religion to the Chaldeans, had no reason but their becoming so famous for Astrology (which they first taught the Greeks) and the mighty Noise which they made every where about Spirits and Dæmons, their Hierarchy of Angels, the final Conflagration of the World, and several other Notions like to these. But this Assertion is easily overthrown by more antient and numerous Authoritys. HERODOTUS, the Father of History, says that *the Egyptians were the first of Men who instituted Assemblys, Shows, and Pilgrimages in honour of the Gods, and that from them the Greeks have learnt it; of which he alledges for a Proof, that these Things were practis'd from remote Times by the Egyptians, whereas but very lately by the Greeks.* 'Tis confest by all that

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Ἡ Πανηγυρὶς δὲ ἀρχὴ καὶ πομπὴ καὶ περιπαγυρὶς  
 πρῶτοι ἀνθρώπων Αἰγυπτίῳ εἰσι οἱ ποιησάμενοι; καὶ  
 παρὰ τούτων οἱ Ἕλληνες μεμαθηκασί. Τεκμηρίον δὲ  
 καὶ τούτου τοῦτο. Ἄν μὲν γὰρ φαίνοιντο ἐκ πολλῆς ἡ  
 γένεσις ποιεῖσθαι, αἱ δὲ Ἑλληνικαὶ νέωσι ἐπομίδουσι.  
 1. 2.

the

the Athenians had a great part of their Worship from their King CECROPS an Egyptian; they had many Customs from DANAUS and his Daughters of the same Country, and the Eleusinian and Samothracian Mysterys were only Copys from those of ISIS and OSIRIS. As to Astrology particularly, HERODOTUS maintains, 'That the Egyptians first invented what Month and Day shou'd belong to each God, and on whatever Day any Person was to be born; what was to be his Lot, what Death he shou'd die, and how he shou'd live; and that these things were made use of by such Greeks as were addicted to Poetry. To the same purpose DION CASSIUS says, 'That the Disposition of the Days according to the seven Planets was the Invention of the Egyptians, tho not communicated to all other People but very lately; and that it was utterly unknown to

\* Και ταδε αλλα Αιγυπτίουςι εστι εξευρημενα: καις γε και ημερη εκαση θεων οτεν εστι; και η εκαση ημερη γενομενος ο'τοιςι εγκυρησεται, και οικος τελειησεται, και οικουσις ης εσται. Και τ'τοιςι των Ελληνων οι εν ποταμοις γενομενοι εχρησαντο. Lib. 2.

\* Το δε διηες ης αστρας ης επ'α ης πλανης αναμασμενος ης ημερας ανακαιδαι, και εση μεν υ'π' Αιγυπτίων, παρ'εσι δε και επι πασης ανθρωπος υ'π'αλλαι πο'ε, ως λεγουσιν, αρεζαμενον. 'Οι γυν αρχαιοι Έλληνες εδωκεν α'το, οσα γε εμε ειδεναι υπεσκητο. Lib. 37.

Letter the old Grecians. HERODOTUS again acquaints us with what the Egyptians affirm'd from their own most antient Records, ' That they had first in use the Surnames of the twelve greater Gods, and that the Greeks borrow'd these things of them : that they were likewise the first who appointed Altars, and Statues, and Shrines for the Gods, and to carve Animals in Stone. This is further confirm'd by LUCIAN, whose Words are these : ' The Egyptians are said to be the first of Men who had the Knowledge of the Gods, who built Temples, and instituted Shrines and Assemblys. They were likewise the first who understood the sacred Names or Words, and the first that taught the sacred Discourses or Language. But not long after the Assyrians learnt the Doctrine of the Gods from the Egyptians ; they

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<sup>1</sup> Διωδεκα δὲ τῶν ἐπωνυμίας ἐλεγον πρῶτες Ἀγυπτίους νομισαί, καὶ Ἕλληνας παρὰ σφῶν ἀναλαβεῖν : βώμης τε καὶ ἀγάλμαθα καὶ νηὺς δίοισι ἀπονέμειν σφῶας πρῶτοι, καὶ ζῶαν λιδοῖσι ἐγγυλῆσαι. Lib. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Πρῶτοι μὲν ἀνθρώπων Ἀγυπτῖοι λεγόμενοι τῶν τε ἐντομῶν λαβόν, καὶ ἑξ ἐισαδαί, καὶ τέματα καὶ πατηρυείας ἀποδείχαι. Πρῶτοι δὲ καὶ ὀνόματα ἱερὰ ἐγγυλῶσαι, καὶ λόγους ἱερὰς ἐλεῖν. Μετὰ δὲ ὁ πολλοσφ χρεῖν παρ' Ἀγυπτίων λόγον Λουκεῖ ἐς τοὺς κινεσάν, καὶ ἱερὰ καὶ νηὺς ἡγείσαν, ἐν τοῖσι καὶ ἀγάλμαθα εἰδέντες, καὶ ζῶανα ἐπιστάτες : τοὺς δὲ παλαιὸν καὶ παρ' Ἀγυπτῖοις ἀξῶναι νομὶ ἦσαν. De Dea Syria.

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also

also built Temples and Shrines, and in these they plac'd Images and erected Statues: yet of old the Temples of the Egyptians were without any Statues. Here are decisive Passages against the Assyrians and the Greeks. But let's hear DIODORUS SICULUS of the Magi in particular. *The Egyptians, says he, affirm that many Colonys were spread over the World out of their Country. For BELUS, who is reckon'd the Son of NEPTUNE and LIBYA, led a Colony into the Land of Babylon; and having fixt his Seat near the River Euphrates, he did after the manner of the Egyptians institute Priests, exempting them from publick and expensive Offices; and by the Babylonians they are stil'd Chaldeans, who observe the Stars after the Example of the Priests, and natural Philosophers, and Astrologers of Egypt. This is back'd*

Letter II.

*The Egypt  
to Babylon  
Babylon  
the Egypt  
the Egypt  
the Egypt  
the Egypt  
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the Egypt*

Ἡ οἰκιστὴς ἐξ Αἰγύπτου φασὶ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀποικίας  
πλεῖστας ἐξ Αἰγύπτου κατὰ πᾶσαν διασπαρῆναι τὴν οἰκου-  
μένην: εἰς Βαβυλῶνα μὲν γὰρ ἀγανὴν ἀποικίαν Βηλὸν  
τοῦ νομίζοντος Ποσειδῶνος εἶναι καὶ Λιβύης: ὃν παρὰ  
τὸν Εὐφράτην πόλιν καλεῖσθαι, ἧς δὲ ἱερεῖς  
καλεῖσθαι παραπληροῦς ἦεν κατ' Αἰγύπτου ἀγέλης,  
καὶ πάσης λείβεργας ἀποδιδυμενῆς, ὡς Βαβυλωνιοὶ κα-  
λεῖσθαι Χαλδαίους: τὰς τε παρατηρήσεις τῶν ἀστρον τήν-  
τοι ποιεῖσθαι, μιμημένους τῆς παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις ἱερείας, καὶ  
φουσκῆς, ἐπὶ δὲ Ἀστρολογίας. Lib. I.

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by

Letter by PAUSANIAS, who says; That  
 II. BELUS the Babylonian had his Name  
 from BELUS an Egyptian the Son of  
 LIBYA. And DIODORUS repeats  
 once again, That the Egyptians said the  
 Chaldeans of Babylon were descended from  
 them, and that they learnt from the Egyptian  
 Priests that Astrology which gave  
 them so much Reputation. To tire you  
 with no more Proofs, the Egyptians  
 had many opportunitys to spread their  
 Doctrins in Asia as well as in Africa  
 (especially before the Assyrian Monarchy)  
 by the prodigious Conquests of  
 SESOSTRIS and his Successors even  
 into India, much further than ALEX-  
 ANDER the Great cou'd penetrate many  
 Ages afterwards. SESOSTRIS was  
 likewise in Thracia, and some other  
 Parts of Europe. NECEPSOS, another  
 Egyptian King, is related to have  
 taught many mysterious Rites to the  
 Magi, the Sciences not being then un-

\* Ο εν Βαβυλωνί Βηλος απο ανδρος Αργυππου Βηλος  
 τε Λιβυης ονομα εχεν. Messeniac.

\* Φασι δε τος εν Βαβυλωνί Χαλδαιους αποικους Αργυπ-  
 πων ουτας, την Δοξαν εχειν την παρ της Αστρολογιας  
 παρα των Ιερεων μαθησας των Αργυππων. Lib. 4.

\* Quique Magos docuit Mysteria vana Necepsos.  
 Aulon. Epist. 19.

worthy of Princes; for **PORPHY**, Letter **II.**  
*RY* tells us, That the Race of the Magi  
 was so potent and honorable among the  
 Persians, that **DARIUS** the Son of  
**HYSTASPES** caus'd to be inscrib'd  
 among other things, on his own Monument,  
 that he was Master to the Magi. I know  
 the Jews and a world of Christians  
 pretend that the Egyptians had all their  
 Learning from **ABRAHAM**, a Chal-  
 dean by Nation, tho not by Profession;  
 a Stranger who liv'd there only two  
 years, and who probably spoke a dif-  
 ferent Language. The Pentateuch  
 makes no mention of his Learning;  
 or if he understood Astronomy, or any  
 other Science, why did he not take the  
 same pains to instruct his own Nation  
 as he did the Egyptians? for the Jews  
 were of all Eastern People the most  
 illiterate; whereas it is recorded in the  
 Acts of the Apostles for the Honor of **C.7. v. 22.**  
**MOSES**, not that he follow'd the  
 Doctrins of **ABRAHAM**, but that he  
 was educated and had excell'd in all  
 the Learning of the Egyptians. The

Ὅσα δὲ μετὰ καὶ σεβασμιον γένος τῆς παρὰ  
 Περσῶν νομοματεῖς, ὡς καὶ Δαρεὼν τὸν Ἰσχυρὸν  
 ἐπύργαζεν τῇ μνηστῇ, πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλοις, ὅτι καὶ Μα-  
 γικῶν γένος διδασκαλός. De Abst. Animal. l. 4. c.

D 4 Pentateuch

**Letter** occasion to make some mention before I have done. Thus it was with other **II.** Doctrins. Yet, as I hinted before, because the Greeks learnt most of their Astronomy and Astrology from the Magi, they imagin'd them to have invented those Sciences : for by reason of their Colonys in Asia and in the Ionian Islands, they were acquainted with the Magi, much sooner than with the Egyptian Prophets, having little knowledge of the latter, till Egypt was conquer'd by the Persians, and till the time of ALEXANDER the Great ; travelling afterwards very frequently thither, and in great numbers.

10. THE Getes learnt the Immortality of the Soul from their Countryman ZAMOLXIS, who was Servant and Disciple to PYTHAGORAS, and who so wrought by his Address on those Scythian Nations, that they not only receiv'd Laws from him, and the Doctrin of a future State ; but so great was their Respect towards him

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<sup>1</sup> Herodot. l. 4. Strabo l. 16. Mnaseas & Hellenicus in Etymologico magno. Porphy. in vita Pythag. Diog. Laert. in Pythagora.

for these Benefits, that after his Death they worship'd him as a God. This Opinion of changing the present Life for a better, made them so fearless in Battel, and so ready to expose themselves to the greatest Dangers, being continually fir'd to a noble Emulation by their Poets, who (like the Gallick Bards) eterniz'd the Memory of those magnanimous Worthys that lost their Lives in War. The Druids of Gaule (of whom were issu'd those in Britain) who were of the same Persuasion with the Getes, and who taught the Transmigration of Souls, borrow'd their Letters from the Greeks, and probably their Philosophy, as JULIUS CÆSAR in express words informs us. This might easily be done by means of the most antient Greek Colony of Marfeilles, famous for Arts and Learning. They might have a Communication with those of the Grecian Country, and Religion behind them in Italy. And from their Neighbors the Germans

<sup>1</sup> Pompon. Mela l. 2. c. 2. cum aliis pæne innumeris.

<sup>2</sup> Cæsar de Bello Gal. l. 6. Pompon. Mela l. 3. c. 2. Amm. Marcel. l. 15. Plinius alique.

<sup>3</sup> Cum in reliquis sære Rebus, publicis privaque Rationibus, Græcæ Litteræ utantur. Lib. 6. de Bello Gallico.

(who

*the Poets of Gaul, who were of the same persuasion with the Getes, and who taught the transmigration of souls, borrowed their letters from the Greeks, and probably their philosophy, as Julius Cæsar in express words informs us.*

† whence the Germans

Letter for the same end. Thus ISIS, OSIRIS, ANUBIS, THOTH, and the like, were at first pointed to above, and their Historys explain'd: SUPHIS, and SETHOS, and PHANES, and MOSES were said to be under ground. But the unconsidering Vulgar hearing the Learned constantly talk of certain Persons in the Stars, believ'd 'em at last to be really there, and that all the others were under ground; because, as CICERO says, *The Bodys of the Dead falling on the Ground, and being cover'd with Earth, they thought that they led the rest of their Lives below: from which Persuasion he observes many Errors to have proceeded, especially the Fables and Terrors of Hell.*

12. ABOUT the Life of those in the Stars I shall speak more largely another time, when I have leisure to write the Discourse I promis'd you about *the Origin of Idolatry*. But at present I shall proceed with those Funeral Rites, which were the occasion of so many

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<sup>1</sup> In •Terram cadentibus Corporibus, hisce hunc testis, sub Terra censabant reliquam vitam agi Mortuorum. *Tusc. Quest. I. I.*

Opinions relating to a future State Letter II.  
 in Egypt, in other Parts of Africa,  
 over all Asia, in many places of Europe,  
 and particularly in Greece. DIODORUS  
 SICULUS, in the first Book of  
 his unvaluable Library, very largely re-  
 lates the Funeral Rites of the Egyp-  
 tians, especially their manner of em-  
 balm'g Bodys to such Perfection, that  
 after many Ages the same Likeness and  
 Lineaments continue: after which he  
 proceeds in these words. *The Rela-  
 tions of the Body that is to be bury'd, as-  
 quaint before-hand the Judges, and the  
 Kindred as well as the Friends of the dead  
 Person with the Day of his Burial: and  
 after telling his Name, they certify that  
 he is at that time to pass over the Lake.  
 After this there assemble above forty  
 Judges, and sitting in a certain Semi-  
 circle, prepar'd on the side of the Lake,  
 the Boat, which is provided in the mean  
 while*

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Τὸ δὲ μέλλοντος δαπτέσθαι σώματος οἱ συγγενεῖς  
 προλαβόντες τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς ταφῆς τοὺς δὲ δικασταὶ καὶ  
 τοῖς συγγενέσιν, ἐπὶ δὲ φίλοις τὸ τελευτηκὲς καὶ  
 διαβεβαιῶσαι, λεγόντες ἐπὶ διαβάνει μέλλει τὴν λιμνὴν  
 τῆς ὁρίας τῆς τελευτηκῆς. Ὁπότε δὲ ἀφ' ὧν ἡμεῖς δι-  
 δασκόμεθα τὸν πρῶτον λόγον, καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἐπὶ  
 τῆς ἡμετέρας, καὶ ὁμοειδέως πρὸς τῆς ἀμύνης: ἡ  
 μέντοι βασις καὶ δαλκίαι καὶ ὁμοειδέως πρὸς τῆς ἀμύνης  
 ταύτης

Letter

II.



while by those to whom that Care belongs, is brought thither by the Ferryman, whom the Egyptians in their Language call CHARON. Wherefore they say that ORPHEUS, having seen this Custom when he had formerly travel'd into Egypt, compos'd his Fable about Hell, partly imitating these things, and partly inventing out of his own Head. Then DIODORUS goes on to tell that every body may accuse or defend the dead Person, who, if he be prov'd to have led a bad Life, is deny'd the usual sort of Burial. From this Prohibition of Burial in Egypt, which was afflicting to the Living and scandalous to the Dead, the Greeks (and from them the Romans) had their Notion that the Souls of the unbury'd were disquieted, and cou'd not pass over the River into the Elysian Fields, turning a noble Practice into a senseless Fable. Hence you may likewise perceive how they came by the Notion of infernal Judges, which Office

ταύτην εχόντων την επιμελειαν ; εφεσίηχε δε ταύτην  
 Περσεύς, ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν Διαλέκτον ὀνομα-  
 ζῶσι Χάρων. Διὸ καὶ φασὶν Ὀρφεα τὸ παλαιὸν εἰς  
 Αἰγύπτῳ πρὸςβαλὼν καὶ διασπαρμένον τὸ τοιοῦτον,  
 μυθεύειναι τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ; τὰ μὲν μυθεύσαντος, τὰ  
 δ' αὖθις ἰδίᾳ πλάσαντων.

they

they bestow'd on MINOS, ÆACUS, and RHADAMANTHUS, the most just Princes among the Greeks. But not to digress, if any false Accuser appear'd, he was severely punish'd; and if none accus'd the dead, then he was put into his Coffin, and his Relations throwing off their Mourning, made a solemn Panegyrick, not magnifying his Dignity or Family, but commending his Education, Piety, Justice, Temperance, and other Virtues. After relating more Particularitys to our purpose, DIODORUS makes this most judicious Observation. *The Greeks, says he, in their commentitious Fables, and by their celebrated Poets have disguiz'd the Truth of these things, as of what relates to the Honor of the Just and Disgrace of the Wicked; and therefore they have bin so far from being able by these means to lead Men to the best sort of Life, that they are themselves despis'd by the Bad, and derided for their Folly. But among*

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Ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ἕλληνας μύθους πεπλάσμενοι καὶ ποτα  
 βταις διαβεβλημένοι τὴν αὐτὴν τῶν πρὶν παρεδωκεν,  
 τὰν τε τῶν εὐσεβῶν τιμὴν, καὶ τὴν τῶν πονηρῶν τιμωρίαν.  
 Τοιούτων οὐχ' οἷμαι εὐρῆσαι δυνατόν τινα. περὶ γὰρ μάλιστα  
 ἐπὶ τοῖς αἰσιν βίον τις ἀνθρώπου; ἀλλὰ τοῦτα μὲν οὐκ  
 τῶν φανερῶν χλευάζονται, καὶ ἀφανίσουσιν; τοῦτο δὲ  
 Πλάτων

~~Lower~~ the Egyptians, the Punishment of the

**II.** *Wicked and the Recompence of the Good,*  
 *not being contain'd in Fables, but exhibi-*  
*ted to our Eyes, each Party is every day*  
*put in mind of their Dutys; and by this*  
*Custom there grows the best and most use-*  
*ful Reformation of Manners. Lower in*  
*the same Book he gives a Catalogue of*  
*such celebrated Greek Philosophers and*  
*Legislators as were initiated in the*  
*Egyptian Learning; and repeats again,*  
*that ORPHEUS' brought from thence*  
*the greatest part of the mysterious Rites*  
*(us'd in Greece) with the Orgys that are*  
*celebrated at their Explanation, and the*  
*Fictions of Hell. Somewhat lower a-*  
*gain, he, that was an Eye-witness,*  
*assures us, That' the Meadow, which was*  
*the feign'd Habitation of the Dead, is a*  
*place by the Lake call'd Acherusia near Mem-*  
*phis,*

Παρεα δὲ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις καὶ μυθώδης ἀλλ' ὁρατὴ τοῖς  
 μὲν πονηροῖς τῆς κολάσεως, τοῖς δ' ἀγαθοῖς τῆς τιμῆς  
 καὶ, καθ' ἕκαστην ἡμέραν ἀμφότεροι τῶν ἑαυτοῖς προσ-  
 κειμένων ὑπεμβέβησκειν; καὶ διὰ τούτου τε τροπὴ με-  
 ριστὴ καὶ συμφορῶσατι διορθώσεως γινέσθαι τῶν ἡδυν. Lib. 1.

Ὁρρεα μὲν γὰρ τῶν μυστικῶν τελετῶν τε πλεῖστα, καὶ  
 τὰ περὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν πλάνην ἐργαζόμενα, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἐν  
 αὐτῇ μυθολογίας ἀπὸ τῆς γένεσιν. Ibid.

Λοιμῶτα δὲ τομίζουσιν καὶ τὴν μυθολογίαν οὐκ ὀρθῶς  
 τῶν μεταλλάξεων τῶν παρὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν καλῶν  
 μυστικῶν

ropolis, which City is surrounded with most beautiful Meads and Groves of Lotus and Calamuses. Nor is it improperly said that the Dead inhabit those places; for that the greatest part and the most sumptuous of the Egyptian Burials are made here, the dead Bodys being transported over the River and Acherusian Lake, and laid there in Grotts made for that purpose. The other Fictions of the Greeks about Hell, do likewise agree with those things which are to this day perform'd in Egypt: for the Vessel for transporting the Bodys is call'd Baris, and a piece of Money to the value of an Obolus is paid for fraught to the Ferryman, who in their Country Language is call'd CHARON. There is also near those places, as they say, the Fane of darkness

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μενην μὲν Ἀχέρουσαν, πλησίον δὲ εὐσαν τῆς Μαιμερας, οὐρανὸν οὖα αὐτὴν λειμονὸν καλλίστων, ἑλών, καὶ λαβὴ καὶ χαλαμῇ. Ἀκολούθως δ' εἰρηδῶται καὶ τὸ χρῆσθαι τοὺς τελευτήσαντας ἐν τοῖς τοῖς ἴσσοις: διὰ τὸ τὰς τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἰας πλείους καὶ μεγας εἰσαυδα γινέσθαι, διαπορδισόμενων. μὲν τῶν μερῶν. διὰ τὴν τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ τῆς Ἀχέρουσιαις λίμνης, τιθέμενων δὲ ἴσων σωματων ἐκ ἰας εἰσαυδα κείμενας θύκας. Συμφωνεῖν δὲ καὶ τ' ἄλλα τὰ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησι καὶ ὅς μὲν μυθολογούμενα τοῖς ἐν νῦν γινόμενοις κατ' Αἰγυπτίον: τὸ μὲν γὰρ διακομίζον τὰ σωματὰ πλοίων, βαρεὺν καλεῖσθαι; τὸ δ' ἐπὶ καθάρου καμῶμα τὸν ὁρῶν τῶν πλοίων διδόναι, καλούμενον καὶ ἰαν συγχεῖν διαλατῶν χαίρων. Ἐσσι δὲ περὶ πλοίων ἴσων τοπῶν τῶν καὶ σκῆψας Ἑλλάδος ἰσων, καὶ πύλας καὶ κίον

Letter darksom **HECATE**, and the Gates of  
 II. **COCYTUS** and **LETHE** made fast  
 with brazen Bolts. There are also other  
 Portals of Truth, and near these the Sta-  
 tue of Justice without a Head. There yet  
 remain among the Egyptians several other  
 things that gave occasion to our Fables,  
 keeping still the same Names, and the  
 same Actions being perform'd. Here's a  
 most natural Account of the Rise of  
 those Poetical Fictions concerning the  
 Elysian Fields, **CHARON** and his  
 Passage-mony, with the different Man-  
 sions of departed Souls, and the several  
 Portals of Hell. All other Origins are  
 false, or manifestly absurd and precarious.  
 This whole Book of the most accurate  
**DIODORUS** deserves to be read: but  
 I have transcrib'd enough for my pur-  
 pose.

13. **THUS** have I shown you,  
**MADAM**, how this Opinion of the  
 Souls Immortality, and the Consequences

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κῆρ καὶ Ἀἰδῆς, διηλεμμενας χαλκῶς οὐχόσιν: ὅ-  
 αρχὴν δὲ καὶ ἄλλας πύλας Ἀἰδηΐας, καὶ πλεῖστον  
 τῶν εἰδῶλον ἀκαθάλον εἶναι Διὸς: πολλὰ δὲ καὶ  
 ἄλλα τῶν μεμυθολογημένων διαμνῶν παρ' Αἰγυπτίους,  
 τῆς αἰωνίου εἰς τῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ τῆς ἐν τῇ σφαιρῇ  
 ἐργασίας. Ibid.

of the same, was introduc'd from the Egyptians among the Grecians, spread by the latter in their Colonys in Asia and Europe, and deliver'd to the Romans, who from the Greeks had their Religion and Laws. I mark'd the Progress of it among the Scythians, Germans, Gauls, and Britains. I have likewise prov'd how from Egypt, the Place of its Birth, it travel'd to the Chaldeans and Indians, and from them over all the Eastern Parts of the World: for 'tis no wonder that this Doctrin was gladly and universally receiv'd (tho not built among the Heathens on its true Reasons) since it flatter'd Men with the Hopes of what they wish above all things whatsoever, namely, to continue their Existence beyond the Grave; there being but few that can bear the very Thoughts of ever ceasing to live somewhere, and most People commonly chusing to be miserable, rather than not to be at all. This was the State of the Soul's Immortality, among those Nations who were not illuminated by Divine Revelation. The People begun it, from them their Children learnt it, at last it became a part of all mens Education (as it happens to Opinions generally receiv'd) and so the Learned themselves

Letter

II.

Letter themselves believ'd it before they had a  
 II. reason for it. 'Tis true, the Vulgar,  
 who are not us'd to Reflections, embrac'd it ever afterwards (as they do still) upon Trust or from Authority: but not so with the Philosophers, who offer'd many probable Arguments for the Soul's separate Existence and eternal Duration. They conceiv'd their own Thoughts or Ideas to be immaterial, and to have nothing in common with Extension; they found a Freedom in their Wills, and a spontaneous Motion in their Bodies; they observ'd a perpetual Contention between their Appetite and their Reason; they laid much stress on their Dreams, and thought that sometimes awake they had certain Presages in their Minds of future Dangers; they saw that Men had an unquenchable Thirst after Knowledg, a Prospect of Futurity, and earnestly desir'd a Happiness that shou'd never end; therefore they concluded that all these things must needs proceed from some Being distinct from the Body, which was self-moving, and consequently immortal; since every Parcel of Matter is mov'd by some external Cause, and that what has Motion in it self can never lose it. The Soul's Immortality was likewise greatly

confirm'd among the Heathens by Letter  
their Legislators, whereof several did II.  
not believe it themselves; but (observ-  
ing that tho' some were vertuous by  
Nature or Temper, and that others were  
made so by the hopes of Reward and  
Honor, or by the Fear of Punishment  
and Disgrace) they further adopted this  
Opinion, as fitting all mens Circum-  
stances, persuading them that in the  
after Life, the Wicked were sure to be  
punish'd for their Crimes, tho' they  
might here escape the Rigor of the  
Laws; and that the Good wou'd like-  
wise meet there with those Rewards,  
which might be unjustly deny'd to  
their Merit in the present Life. By  
these this Argument was deem'd to  
have more of Reason than of Politicks in  
it, and they have labor'd to prove that  
such a Conduct was necessarily be-  
coming the Goodness and Equity of a  
most wise Being. They had several  
disputes about the Soul's Pre-existence,  
Duration, Essence, and the Manner and  
Time of its coming into the Body, its  
separating of it, and their Union together.  
On these Subjects there have bin written  
many subtil and ingenious Conjectures,  
not more that were ridiculous, extra-  
vagant, and impossible. Nor have the

Letter modern Philosophers succeeded any better than the Antients, and among both of them scarce any two were of a mind ; whereas in my opinion the Moderns have not the same right to examine this matter as the Antients, but ought humbly to acquiesce in the Authority of our SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, who brought Life and Immortality to Light.

14. 'TIS no wonder that a Notion, thus grounded among the Heathens, was doubted or deny'd by great numbers of them, even by whole Sects, as the Epicureans for example ; and in some other Sects the distinct Being of it after Death was totally destroy'd, they making it then to return to the Soul of the World, and to be swallow'd up therein. But in all Sects there never wanted particular Persons who really oppos'd the Soul's Immortality, tho they might accommodate their ordinary Language to the Belief of the People : for most of the Philosophers ( as we read ) had two sorts of Doctrins, the one internal and the other external, or the one private and the other publick ; the latter to be indifferently communicated to all the World, and the former only very cautiously to their best Friends,

or

to some few others capable of receiving it, and that wou'd not make any ill of the same. PYTHAGORAS himself did not believe the Transmigration which has made him so famous to Posterity; for in the internal or secret Doctrine he meant no more than the eternal evolution of Forms in Matter, those less Vicissitudes and Alterations, which turn every thing into all things, all things into any thing, as Vegetables and Animals become part of us, we become part of them, and both become parts of a thousand other things in the Universe, Earth turning into Water, Water into Air, Air into Æther, and so back again into Mixtures without End or Number. In the external or popular Doctrine impos'd on the Mob by an equivocal expression, that *they shou'd become various kinds of Beasts after Death*, thereby to deter 'em the more effectually from Wickedness. Take notice, M A D A M, in his intimate Acquaintance and Discourse TIMÆUS LOCURUS speaks. *any Person, says he, will continue penitent and refractory, he shall be sure Punishment both from the Laws, and from*

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Εὰν δὲ καλῶς σκεψασθῇ καὶ σπουδῇ, τὸ πρὸς ἀποκαθάρ-  
σιν, ἢ τὴν τῶν νόμων καὶ ἢ ἐκ τῶν λόγων συν-  
τορεῖται



## The History of the

But after Death you're curious where  
to be?

Even where the Children yet unborn  
remain.

We're lost in Darkness and devouring  
Time.

Death wastes the Body, and at last de-  
stroys;

Nor spares the Soul. Infernal Depths,  
and those

Dark Kingdoms of th' infernal  
Lord,

With Cerberus guarding the well-bolted  
Gates,

Are only senseless Tales and empty  
Words,

A Fable like unto a frightful Dream.

The best reason I can find for the Incre-  
dulous of the Poets, is the Experience  
they had of their own Fictions about  
the future State of the Soul: for scarce

Quæris quo jaceas post obitum loco?

Quo non nata jacent.

Tempus nos avidum devorat & Chaos.

Mors individua est noxia Corpori,

Nec parcens Animæ. Tanara, & aspero

Régnum sub Domino, Limen & obsidens.

Custos non facili Cerberus ostio,

Rumores vacui, verbaque inania,

Et par sollicito Fabula Somnio.

Æneid. lib. 6. C. 60.

one of 'em believ'd the charming Descriptions they made of the Elysian Fields, nor their terrible and elegant Relations of the Torments of the Wicked. VIRGIL, the most accurate and ample Topographer of the infernal Regions, cou'd yet, when he thought of EPICURUS, break out into this Philosophical Rapture :

*Happy ! who cou'd of things the Cause  
For know,*

*Cur'd of all Fears, who cou'd tread  
Under foot*

*Relentless Fate, and greedy Waves  
Of Hell !*

I should never have done if I alledg'd all the Passages where HORACE, JUVENAL, and the rest of them sport with the stories about Hell, and Ghosts, and the like : but CORNELIUS SEVERUS has exprest the Minds of them all, tho after a more serious manner, in his Poem concerning the burning of Mount Etna.

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Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere Causas,  
Atque Metus omnes & inexorabile Fatum  
Subjicis pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari !

Of

Letter  
III



Of all our Errors and Mistakes of things

The greatest part proceeds from tri-  
gick Scenes.

In Verse the Poets, not in History,

Black airy Spirits floating under  
ground,

And PLUTO's pallid Regions after  
Death.

The Poets feign'd the Stygian Waves  
and Dogs.

These have foul TITYUS's <sup>er</sup> sev'n  
Acres stretch'd;

'Tis they, poor TANTALUS, who  
thee torment

With Hunger merciless and Thirst;  
'tis they,

O MINOS and O EACUS, who  
sing.

Taur splendid Judgments upon trem-  
bling Souls;

'Tis

---

Plurima pars Scenæ rerum est fallacia: Vates

Sub ferris nigros viderunt Carmine Manes;

Atque inter cineres Ditis pallentia Regna.

Mentiti vates Stygias Undasque, Canesque.

Hi Tityon septem stragere in jugera foedum;

Sollicitant magna te circum, Tantalæ, penæ;

Sollicitantque Sici; Minos, tuasque, Eacæ, in umbris  
Jura

## Soul's Immortality.

69

Letter II.

*'Tis they who turn Ixion's restless Wheel,  
And forge all st' other Fables under Earth.*

*Earth's not enough: they pry about  
the Gods,  
And boldly view that Heaven where they  
ne'er shall come.*

ou'l think me uncharitable, perhaps,  
r excluding them by this last Line out  
Paradise: but, besides that they de-  
erve no less for their Fictions in pre-  
dice of Truth, the Injury's not so  
eat; since they cannot much fear a  
ell of their own making.

16. BUT the Reasons of those who  
ny'd the Immortality of the Soul,  
hether Poets or Philosophers, are al-  
ost all comprehended in a narrow  
ompafs by PLINY the elder, in the  
venth Book of his *Natural History*.  
After the Interment of the Body, says he,  
ere are various Conjectures about de-  
parted

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Jura canunt; ideinque rotant Ixionis orbem;  
Quicquid & interius facti sibi conscia Terra est.  
Non est Terra satis: spectantur Numina Divum,  
Nec metuunt oculos alieno admittere Coelo, &c.  
Post sepulturam variz Manium Ambages. Ora-  
bus a suprema die eadem que ante primam; nec

Letter parted Souls. But the State of all Men  
 II. is the same after the last Day of their  
 Life, as before the first; nor is there any  
 more Sense in Body or Soul after Death,  
 than before the Day of our Birth. Yet  
 the Vanity of living Men extends to fu-  
 ture Ages, and feigns to it self a new  
 Life in the very time of Death: some  
 bestowing Immortality on the Soul; some  
 teaching the Transmigration of the same;  
 others allowing Sense to those in Hell, and  
 worshipping their Ghosts, and making a  
 God of him, who is not at present so  
 much as a Man. As if indeed the man-  
 ner of breathing in Man differ'd any way  
 from that of all other Animals; or as if  
 there cou'd not be found many things  
 which enjoy a longer Life, to which no  
 body dreams of attributing the like Im-  
 mortality. But what sort of Body has  
 the separate Soul? Of what Substance?  
 Where

---

magis a morte sensus ullus aut Corpori aut Animæ,  
 quam ante Natalem. Eadem enim Vanitas in futurum  
 etiam se prorogat, & in mortis quoque tempore ipsa  
 sibi vitam mentitur: alias Immortalitatem Animæ;  
 alias Transfigurationem; alias sensum Inferis dando,  
 & Manes colendo, Deumque faciendo qui jam etiam  
 Homo esse deserit. Ceu vero ullo modo spirandi ratio  
 Homini a cæteris Animalibus distet; aut non diutur-  
 niora multa in vita reperiantur, quibus nemo similem  
 divinat Immortalitatem. Quod autem Corpus Animæ  
 per

Where resides its Thinking? How does it see? How does it hear? Or by what means does it touch? About what is it busy'd? Or what Good can there be without these things? Where likewise is the Mansion thereof? And in so many Ages, how vast must be the multitude of Souls, as well as of Ghosts! These are Allurements to quiet Children, and the Fictions of Mortals that wou'd live without end. The Vanity of preserving the Bodys of Men, is like that of the Resurrection promis'd by DEMOCRITUS, who did not revive himself. But what a prodigious Madness is it, to think that Life can be renew'd by Death? Or what Repose can Mortals ever enjoy, if the Soul be alive above, and the Ghost has Sense below? In earnest, this Fondness and Credulity destroys the Usefulness of  
 F Death,

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per se? Quæ Materia? Ubi Cogitatio illi? Quomodo visus? Auditus? Aut quæ tangit? Qui usus ejus? Aut quod sine his Bonum? Quæ deinde Sedes? Quantæ multitudo tot seculis Animarum, velut Umbrarum! Puerilium ista Delinimentorum, avidæque nunquam desinere mortalitatis Commenta sunt. Similis & de aservandis Corporibus Hominum, ac reviviscendi promissa Democrito vanitas, qui non revixit ipse. Quæ (malum) ista Dementia est, iterari Vitam morte? Quæve Genitis quies unquam, si in sublimi sensus Animæ manet inter infernos Umbra? Perdit profecto ista Dulcedo

## *The History of the*

er Death, which is the principal Good of Nature; and doubles the Pains of a dying Man, if he happens to be concern'd about his future State: for if it be a pleasure to live, to whom can it be pleasant to have liv'd? But how much easier and more certain is it for every one to believe his own Experience, and to draw an Argument of his Security from the Consideration of what he has bin before he was born? Such are the Reasonings of Men who talk all the while of they know not what, having false Notions of the Origin of the Soul, none at all of its Union with the Body, and but imperfect Guesses about its Essence, which leads 'em consequently to doubt of its separate Existence, and so to deny its Immortality. But, however Men left to themselves may mistake, 'tis impossible that God shou'd lie; and what he has reveal'd, tho not in every thing falling under our Comprehension, must yet be true and absolutely certain. And in

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cedo Credulitasque præcipuum Naturæ bonum, mortem; ac duplicet Obitus, si dolere etiam post-futuri Estimatione evenit: etenim si dulce vivere est, cui potest esse vixisse? At quanto facilius certiusque sibi quemque credere, ac Specimen securitatis antegenitali sumere experimento? *Cap. 56.*

this

this consists no small Advantage of Believers, that tho they may be equally ignorant with others about the nature of a thing, yet they may have the greatest Conviction of its Existence, and make that use of this Discovery which is beneficial or convenient.

Letter

II.

17. BUT I exceed my design of a bare Historian; besides that you need no Antidote, SERENA, against the Poison of an abler Adversary than PLINY. I have freely given you my Opinion how the Heathens came by their Notion of the Soul's Immortality, with my Reasons for the same: and if I attribute the Invention of this Doctrine, as well as of Astrology, and most of the other Sciences, to the old Egyptians, 'tis not out of any Partiality to an extinct Nation (tho never so learned, wise, or polite) but led by historical Proofs to a full Persuasion. In treading the Mazes of Antiquity, I am secure from all suspicion of Favor or Fear, of Interest or Revenge. I can't be thought to flatter NECEPSOS, if I shou'd make him pass for the King of Astrologers; and I am come too late into the World to expect any Recompence from SESOSTRIS, who, I think, far exceeds all

**Letter** the other Heroes and Conquerors of Antiquity. When I undertook to examine  
**II.**  this Subject, the Discovery of Truth was the only end I propos'd to my self, besides that of obeying your Commands, which shall be always, **MADAM**, receiv'd with more Alacrity and Submission, than those of any Monarch in the Universe, by your most oblig'd and devoted Servant.

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**LETTER**

## LETTER III.

*The Origin of Idolatry, and  
Reasons of Heathenism.*

I. **I** AM under a double Obligation, MADAM, to impart my Thoughts to you about *the Origin of Idolatry*, both from the Promise I made you by word of mouth, and by what I have since written to you in the Letter concerning *the Soul's Immortality among the Heathens*. But you are not to expect an account of all the ancient Superstitions, which would require many Volumes, nor of any one Religion whatsoever. I shall only endeavour to show by what means the Reason of men became so deprav'd, as to think of subordinate Deitys, how the Worship of many Gods was first

Letter introduc'd into the world, and what  
 III. induc'd Men to pay Divine Honors to  
 their Fellow-Creatures, whether on  
 Earth or in the Heavens: then I shall  
 explain the Fables of the Heathens by  
 general and certain Principles, giving  
 the occasion of their Temples, Priests,  
 and Altars; of their Images and Sta-  
 tues; their Oracles, Sacrifices, Feasts,  
 Expiations, Judiciary Astrology, Ghosts,  
 and Specters; of the tutelary Powers of  
 several Countrys; of Peoples thinking  
 that Heaven is over us, that Hell is  
 under us, and such other things as com-  
 monly occur in the Greek and Roman  
 Authors. Tho with very small pains  
 I could manifestly prove that in Egypt  
 Men had first, long before others, arriv'd  
 at the various beginnings of Religions (as  
 AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS  
 speaks) and that they preserv'd the first  
 occasions of Sacred Rites conceal'd in  
 their secret Writings; yet I shall not  
 trouble you with repeating the Argu-  
 ments I have already produc'd to this  
 purpose in the History of the Soul's Im-

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Hic primum Homines, longe ante alios, ad varia  
 Religionum incunabula (ut dicitur) pervenerunt; &  
 initia prima Sacrorum caute tuerentur condita Scriptis  
 arcanis.

mortality,

mortality, from the Authority of HE- Letter  
 RODOTUS, DIODORUS SICU- III.  
 LUS, LUCIAN, DION CASSIUS, ~~~~~  
 MACROBIUS, and others: nor will  
 I urge that, by Examples and Laws  
 from the Pentateuch, it clearly appears  
 that Magick, the Interpretation of  
 Dreams, Astrology, and Necromancy,  
 were long us'd in Egypt before they  
 were known in Chaldæa or any other  
 place.

2. THE most antient Egyptians,  
 Persians, and Romans; the first Pa-  
 triarchs of the Hebrews, with several  
 other Nations and Sects, had no sacred  
 Images or Statues, no peculiar Places or  
 costly Fashions of Worship; the plain  
 Baisness of their Religion being most  
 agreeable to the Simplicity of the Di-  
 vine Nature, as indifference of Place or  
 Time were the best Expressions of in-  
 finite Power and Omnipresence. But  
 tho God did thus make Men upright; yet  
 they found out (says the wisest King of Eccl. 7. 29.  
 Israel) many Inventions. And certainly  
 when once a Man suffers himself to be  
 led into precarious or arbitrary Practices,  
 he cannot stop for any Reason, but  
 what, if it be good, must conclude with  
 equal Force against all. I believe I

Letter may without much difficulty prove,  
 III. that such as first entertain'd Designs  
 against the Liberty of Mankind, were  
 also the first Depravers of their Reason.  
 For none, in his right senses, can ever  
 be persuaded voluntarily to part with  
 his Freedom ; and he that makes use of  
 Force to deprive him of it, must have  
 brib'd or deluded very many before-  
 hand to support his unjust Pretensions,  
 by which accession of strength he cou'd  
 seduce, frighten, or subdue others. It  
 will not therefore appear unlikely that  
 Men very early learnt to have the same  
 Conceptions of God himself, which  
 they had before of their earthly Princes:  
 and after thus fancying him mutable,  
 jealous, revengeful, and arbitrary, they  
 next endeavour'd to procure his Favor  
 much after the same manner that they  
 made their court to those who pre-  
 tended to be his Representatives or  
 Lieutenants, nay to be Gods them-  
 selves, or to be descended of heavenly  
 Parentage, as the antient Monarchs us'd  
 to do.

3. IT seems evident from the re-  
 moteft Monuments of Learning, that  
 all Superstition originally related to the  
 Worship of the Dead, being principally  
 deriv'd

deriv'd from Funeral Rites, tho the Letter  
first occasion might be very innocent or III.  
audable, and was no other than Orations ~~~~~  
wherein they were sometimes personally  
address'd (such as the Panegyricks of the  
Egyptians) or Statues dedicated with  
many Ceremonys to their Memory.  
But the Flatterers of great Men in the  
Persons of their Predecessors, the ex-  
cessive Affection of Friends or Rela-  
tions, and the Advantage which the  
Heathen Priests drew from the Credi-  
tity of the simple, carry'd this matter  
a great deal further. Not only Kings  
and Queens, great Generals and Legis-  
lators, the Patrons of Learning, Pro-  
moters of curious Arts, and Au-  
thors of useful Inventions, partook of  
this Honor ; but also such private Per-  
sons, as by their virtuous Actions had  
distinguish'd themselves from others,  
were often consecrated to pious and  
eternal Memory by their Country or  
their Kindred, as reputable to the Dead,  
and exemplary to the Living. This is  
the true reason (as we shall shew in its  
proper place) of all Nations having  
their proper tutelary Gods ; and hence

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! Divi Indigetes.

are

Letters are deriv'd the peculiar Religions of particular Familys. **PLINY**, in the second Book of his *Natural History*, says, That the most antient way of Mens paying their Acknowledgments to their Benefactors, was by deifying of them after their Decease (which was affirm'd by **CICERO** with several others before him) and that the several Appellations of the Gods and of the Stars are deriv'd from the meritorious Actions of Men. The first Idolatry therefore did not proceed (as 'tis commonly suppos'd) from the Beauty, or Order, or Influence of the Stars: but Men, as I told you in the *History of the Soul's Immortality*, observing Books to perish by Fire, Worms, or Rottenness; and Iron, Brass, or Marble not less subject to violent Hands or the Injurys of the Weather, they impos'd on the Stars (as the only

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\* *Sacra Gentilitia.*

\* Hic est vetustissimus referendi bene merentibus Gratiæ mos, ut tales Numinibus adscribant: quippe & omnium aliorum nomina Deorum, & quæ supra retuli Syderum, ex hominum nata sunt meritis.

\* Suscepit æquæ viri Hominum consuetudoque communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in Cœlum fama ac voluntate tollerent; hinc Hercules, hinc Castor & Pollux, &c. *De Nat. Deor. l. 2.*

everlasting Monuments) the proper **Letter**  
Names of their Heroes, or of some- **III.**  
thing memorable in their History. 

ERATOSTHENES the Cyrenean, a very antient Philosopher of prodigious Knowledge in all the Sciences, wrote a Book (yet extant) of *the Constellations*, wherein he delivers the Reasons of their Names, which are perpetual Allusions to antient History, tho wonderfully disguiz'd by Time, and for the most part mere Fables. The most learned Monsieur LE CLERC, when he wrote an Extract of ERATOSTHENES, among some other Mythological Tracts in the eighth Volume of *the Universal and Historical Library*, made the following Epigram.

*Antiquity, b'ing sure that Nature's  
Force  
Wou'd Brass and Marble Monuments  
consume,  
Did wisely its own History transmit  
To future Times by Heav'n's eternal  
Fires.*

---

*Tempore, cum lapidum sciret monumenta vetustas,  
Atque perire suo cuncta metallâ situ;  
Cauta, suam, ætates ferrur docuisse futuras  
Cælorum æternis ignibus, Historiam.*

In

Letter

III.



In other places he declares himself to be of the same opinion concerning the Appellations of the Stars, and in that very Journal explains some Fables upon this Principle. As divers Nations learnt this Custom one of another, so they accordingly chang'd their Spheres, each imposing on the heavenly Bodys the Names and Actions belonging to their own Country. This is manifest in the Spheres of the Greeks and Barbarians, and for this reason the Cretans maintain'd *that most of the Gods were born among them, being Men, who, for their Benefits to the Publick, had obtain'd immortal Honors*: for they believ'd the Grecian Gods to be those of all Mankind, and knew not that in other places this way of naming the Constellations and deifying deserving Men, was long in use before they had practis'd it. Nor was there wanting one among the Christians, who, approving this Method, endeavour'd to abolish those

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*Τὸν θεὸν δὲ τοῖς πλείουσιν μυθολογεῖται παρ' ἑαυτοῖς γινώσκειναι, τοὺς δὲ διὰ τὰς κοινὰς εὐεργετίας τυχεύοντας ἀθανάτων τιμῶν. Diod. Sic. l. 5.*

Heathen

Heathen Names, as not understood, or of no concern to us; and to impose on the Stars new Names in their stead, containing the History of the Old and New Testament. But since he cou'd not prevail with the Astronomers, let's not digress. At last such as were ignorant or ashamed of the true Reasons of these things, wou'd justify their Worship (tho, as I shall evince, by weak Arguments) from the endless and orderly Revolution, the admirable Lustre, and general Usefulness of the Sun, Moon, and other Planets and Stars. This did likewise give the Philosophers a handle to explain the Motions of the Planets by certain Intelligences fixt and inhabiting in their Orbs, which they perpetually guided in their Courses; and hence the Bodys of the Sun and Moon are painted like a Face with Eyes, Nose, and a Mouth.

4. THE Opinion of the twelve greater Gods proceeded from certain Historys affix'd to the twelve Signs of the Zodiack, as the seven Planets bear the Names of as many Persons, to whom were also consecrated the Days of the Week, but reputed more or less holy,

**Letter** holy, lucky or fortunate, according to  
**III.** the Temper and Dignity of these Gods :  
 ~~~~~ so that the Egyptian Division of Time  
 into Months and Weeks, and the stories  
 they wou'd perpetuate by the Stars,  
 gave a Rise to the most eminent Gods of  
 the Heathens. From hence very natu-  
 rally Judiciary Astrology had its be-  
 ginning: for the People, as you'll see  
 lower, believing those Gods to corre-  
 spond with their Priests, who they  
 thought might as well foretel any other  
 Secret as they did Eclipses, consulted  
 them about all they dreaded or wished.  
 The fluctuating of mens Minds be-  
 tween Hope and Fear, is one of the  
 chief Causes of Superstition: for being  
 no way able to foresee the Event of  
 what greatly concerns them, they now  
 hope the best, and the next minute  
 fear the worst, which easily leads them  
 not only to take any thing for a good  
 or bad Omen, which happen'd to them  
 in any former good luck or misfortune;  
 but also to lay hold of any Advice, to  
 consult Diviners and Astrologers. 'Tis  
 just after the same manner with sick  
 Persons, who frequently prefer a Con-  
 jurer to the best Doctor, and a ridicu-  
 lous Charm to the most excellent Re-  
 medy.

medy. *Magick it self* (in the worst Letter sense) *had its undoubted Original from* III. *Physick, as PLINY says, pretending to afford better Remedys, to be nobler and more divine: to its flattering and most alluring Promises were added the joint Forces of Religion (to which Mankind is always extremely obnoxious) and of Mathematical Arts (meaning Astrology) every body being desirous to know what regards him for the future, and believing that the Truth of these Things may be certainly learnt from Heaven. Thus captivating Mens Understandings by this triple Ty, it increas'd to such a prodigious pitch, &c. Over and above the Impressions of Religion in barbarous Words and Charms; and of Astrology, in the Influence and Intelligence of the Stars, the Magicians wou'd appear not to act*

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*Natum primum e Medicina nemo dubitat, ac specie saluari irrepsisse velut altiore sanctiorẽque quam Medicinam: ita blandissimis desideratissimisque promissis addidisse vires Religionis, ad quas maxime etiamnum caligat humanum genus: atque ut hoc quoque suggererit miscuisse Artes mathematicas, nullo non modo futura de sese sciendi, atque ea e Cælo verissime peti credente. Ita, possessus hominum sensibus triplici nodo, in tantum Fastigium adolevit, &c. Nat. Hist. lib. 30.*

without

Letter without rational Grounds, by the occult physical Virtues of certain Herbs, Stones, Minerals, and other Things extremely difficult to be procur'd, and only known to themselves. I have already prov'd in my last Letter, that the Egyptians were the Inventers of Astrology; and tho CICERO, the Disciple of the Greeks, inclines to attribute it rather to the Chaldeans of Assyria, yet it's worth your while to hear how cautiously this wise Man has express'd himself. *The Chaldeans, says he, not those so call'd from their Profession but from their Nation, by a constant Observation of the Stars are thought to have fram'd a Science, whereby it may be foretold to every Person what may happen to him, and to what Condition he is born. The Egyptians likewise, from the Antiquity of Times, are believ'd to have had the same Art for innumerable Ages.*

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<sup>1</sup> Chaldzi, non ex Artis sed ex Gentis vocabulo nominati, diuturna Observatione Syderum Scientiam putantur effecisse, ut prædici posset quid cuique eveni- rum, & quo quisque Fato natus esset. Eandem Artem etiam Egyptii longinquitate temporum innumerabilibus pene sæculis consequati putantur. De Divinat. lib. i.

5. SINCE thus I have accounted for Magick and judiciary Astrology, I shall, before I go any further, add a word or two about Peoples looking up when they pray, believing Heaven to be over their Heads, and Hell under their Feet. I shall likewise produce the occasional Causes, of Ghosts and Specters: for all those Things came from the same common Root with the Origin of Idolatry, that is, from the Rites of the Antients about dead Bodys. In the Letter about *the Immortality of the Soul among the Heathens*, I explain'd to you by what Degrees the People came to be persuaded, that there were Persons living in the Stars; and here I'll show you how they arriv'd to the supreme Dignity of Godship: from which you'll easily perceive that this introduc'd the Custom of Mens lifting up their Eyes, and extending their Hands to Heaven when they pray, directing themselves to the Gods whom they beheld above them. From the same Fœderal Rites they believ'd Hell to be under them; and to be the Mansion of the Good and the Bad, tho' distinguish'd in their Places

Letter and Conditions; because all sorts of Men  
 III. were equally bury'd, and only a smaller number deify'd, whom they thought to be above: whereas in the Universe, properly speaking, there is in reality neither Above nor Below, Right nor Left, East, West, North, or South, these being only abstracted Notions, denoting the Relations of particular Bodys to one another, and their several Situations in respect of us. The Fanc[y] of Ghosts and Specters proceeded in like manner from the Egyptian Mummies, these being so long kept intire, not only in the Grotts near Memphis, but also by many People in fine Apartments at home, and which (whether preserving their Lineaments fresh, or becoming ghastly with Time) cou'd naturally make frightful Impressions on Children, Strangers, and the ignorant Vulgar. Tho Humation, or the placing of the intire Corps under Ground, was the most antient and universal manner of Burial, and that the Athenians are acknowledg'd to have learn'd it of the Egyptians, yet you know the Romans were accusom'd to burn their dead Bodys; and nevertheless, as CICERO judiciously remarks, they

they were nothing cur'd thereby of Letter  
III.  
 their Notions concerning Ghosts and Specters, Humation having bin likewise their first Method of Burial. And so prevalent was Error, says he, that tho they knew the Bodys were burnt, yet they feign'd such things to be transacted in the infernal Places, which without Bodys can neither be done nor understood: For as they cou'd not frame any Notion in their Minds of Souls living in a separate State, so they sought out some Form or Figure. Thence proceeded all HOMER's Divination by the Dead; thence those necromantick Rites which my Friend APPIUS us'd to perform; thence in our Neighbourhood the Lake of Avernus,

*Whence Ghosts are nightly rais'd, and  
 Gates of deepest Hell*

Tantumque valuit Error—ut corpora cremata cum  
 scirent, tamen ea fieri apud inferos fingerent, quæ sine  
 corporibus nec fieri possent nec intelligi. Animos enim  
 per seipsoſ viventes non poterant mente complecti;  
 Formam aliquam Figuramque quærebant. Inde Homeri  
 tota Nævia: inde ea quæ meus amicus Appius Ne-  
 apolitanus faciebat: inde in Vicinia nostra Avernæ Lacus,  
 Unde Animæ excitantur obscura umbra, aperto ostio  
 Alti Acherontis, falso sanguine imagines mortuorum.

*Tusc. Quest. lxi.*

Letter

III.

Open to false Bodys, Images of the Dead.

6. **THUS** you see, **MADAM**, how they took care to people Hell ; and the truth is, that the very Heaven of the Gentiles was wholly inhabited by Colonys from our Earth. **CICERO** in his first *Tusculan Disputation*, boldly says, *Is not all Heaven full of human Race? If I shou'd be at the pains of searching among the Antients, and particularly the Greek Writers, those, who are accounted the principal Gods, will be found to have remov'd from among us into Heaven. Ask whose are the Sepulchers they show in Greece. Remember, seeing you are initiated, what is told at the Celebration of the Mysterys; and then you'll understand how very far this Business reaches.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Totum pene Coelum nonne humano Genere completum est? Si vero scrutari vetera, & ex his ea quæ Scriptores Græci prodiderunt eruere coner; ipsi illi, majores gentium Dii qui habentur, hinc a nobis profecti in Cœlum reperiuntur. Quare quorum demonstrantur sepulchra in Græcia. Reminiscere, quoniam es initiatus, quæ traduntur Mysteriis; tum denique quam hoc late pateat intelliges.*

Nor

Nor was it at the Eleusinian Mysterys <sup>Letter</sup> only that such Discoverys were made, <sup>III.</sup> for those of the Egyptians adumbrated the Death of their deify'd King OSIRIS and his Queen ISIS; to speak nothing of the Syrian Rites in Honor of ADONIS and other Deitys, which King DAVID most properly calls *the Sacrifices of the Dead*. It is as true of all the Mysterys in general, what CICERO <sup>Psal. 106.</sup> <sup>28.</sup> says in another place of those of Eleusis, Samothracia, and Lemnos, '*That being explain'd, and reduc'd to the Examination of Reason, the Nature of Things is better known than that of the Gods*'. EUHEMERUS, an old Sicilian Poet and Philosopher, wrote the History of SATURN, JUPITER, and the rest of that sort, describing the Birth, Country, Actions, and Buryal-place of each; and, as PLUTARCH words it, '*He humaniz'd the Gods, not transforming but reducing them to Men, such as they truly were before*'. But, not con-

\* Quibus explicatis, ad rationemque revocatis, rerum magis natura cognoscitur quam Deorum. *De Nat. Deor. lib. 1.*

\* Εξασθενησαι τα θνα.

\* Ab Euhemero autem & Mortes & Sepulturæ demonstrantur Deorum. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1.*

Letter most natural, the most universal, and  
 III. what gave occasion to all the rest. The  
 same excessive Respect was transfer'd by  
 degrees to other things, both as being  
 the Gifts of the Gods, and for their own  
 innate Excellency. *There are many other  
 Natures of the Gods, says CICERO,  
 (not without reason, because of their  
 great Benefits) instituted and nam'd by  
 the wisest Men of Greece, and by our  
 Ancestors: for whatever cou'd bring great  
 profit to Mankind, that thing they thought  
 cou'd not be made without the Divine Boun-  
 ty towards Men. But they did not re-  
 strain this Notion to those useful things  
 without us, nor to the celestial Bodies;  
 they also extended the like Privilege  
 to the Dispositions of the Mind, to its  
 Facultys, and Virtues: for, according  
 to the same CICERO, 'The thing it  
 self, in which there is any great worth, is*  
 so

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<sup>1</sup> Multæ autem aliæ naturæ Deorum ex magnis Bene-  
 ficiis eorum, non sine causa, & a Græciæ sapientissimis  
 & majoribus nostris constitutæ nominatæque sunt:  
 quicquid enim magnam utilitatem generi afferret hu-  
 mano, id non sine divina Bonitate erga Homines fieri  
 arbitrabantur. *De Nat. Deor. l. 2.*

<sup>2</sup> Tum autem res ipsa in qua vis inest major aliqua  
 sic

so term'd by them, that even this very Letter Worth is call'd a God, as Fidelity, the Mind, &c. And so Virtue, Honor, Safety, Concord, Chastity, Liberty, Victory, Clemency, Piety, and such like, were deify'd; in all which things, adds he, ' because there was so great a Worth that it could not be manag'd without God, the Thing it self has obtain'd the name of a God, of which kind the words Cupid and Desire, Venus and Love, are consecrated. Without question, when wise and good Men perceiv'd that the People wou'd needs have a plurality of Gods, and Temples dedicated to them, they, to comply with their Weakness, and at the same time to bring 'em as much as they cou'd to better and nobler Thoughts, deify'd such Things. Hence may be perceiv'd how so many Things came to be deify'd, which have no personal Form or Existence, and are nothing else but mere

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sic appellatur, ut ea ipsa vis nominetur Deus, ut Fides, ut Mens, &c. *Ibid.*

Quarum omnium rerum quia vis erat tanta ut sine Deo regi non posset, ipsa res Deorum nomen obtinuit, quo ex genere Cupidinis & Voluntatis, & lubentiae Veneris vocabula consecrata sunt. *Ibid.*

Propertys,

## 5      *The Origin of Idolatry,*

ter Property, Modes, or Accidents. This I made C I C E R O appoint in his Laws (a matter practis'd in Rome before) that those things shou'd be reputed Gods, *'for the sake of which Man was admitted to ascend into Heaven.— 'Tis well done,* says he, *that the Mind, Piety, Virtue, Faith, are consecrated, of all which the Temples are publickly dedicated at Rome; that those who have them (and all good Men have them) may think that the Gods themselves are plac'd in their Minds.*

8. BUT as the Superstitious pervert every thing in Heaven and Earth, so they fail'd not to do in this case, consecrating the most vitious and abominable things, for which our Author justly reprehends them. The Athenians were blest'd with a couple of fine Goddesses, Contumely and Impudence; the Romans had Fear and Hope, Paleness

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\* Propter quæ datur homini ascensus in Coelum.— Bene vero quod Mens, Pietas, Virtus, Fides, consecrantur manu, quarum omnium Romæ dedicata publice Tempia sunt: ut illa qui habeant (habent autem omnes boni) Deos ipsos in Animis suis collocatos putent. *De Leg. l. 2.*

and

and Trembling. The destructive Fever had an Altar; and there was an endless rabble of Gods presiding over the foulest Distempers, and even over Actions very barbarous and obscene. The Egyptians, besides the Worship of the celestial Gods, or of the Stars and Planets, had withal a symbolical Worship on Earth, attributing Divine Virtues and paying a religious Respect to almost all sorts of Animals and Plants, not excepting the most vile and contemptible. Yet all parts of Egypt did not reverence the same Species. The Reasons they alledg'd in their own Justification, were either the Usefulness of these things, or that the several Deitys manifested their particular Powers more in one Species than in another, or they pretended to some Allegory drawn from Morality or Natural Philosophy. *In their Sacred Rites, says PLUTARCH, there's nothing appointed that's unreasonable (as some imagine) or fabulous, or from Superstition; but some things*

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\* Ουδεν αλογον, κδδ μωδωδες, κδδ υπο Δεωιδωμω-  
ρας (ωσπερ ενιοι νομωσυν) εγκαλειστοιχα ιερωσιναι:  
αλλα

Letter things having moral and useful Causes,

III. and others not being void of some historical or philosophical Elegance. Agree-

able to which C I C E R O says, that the very Egyptians, <sup>1</sup> who are so much laugh't at, have not consecrated any Beast, but for some Advantage that they drew from it. This symbolical Theology made several learned Men believe that all the other parts of the Heathen Religions might and ought to be so explain'd, which I shall prove to be a great mistake before I have done. The Egyptians indeed carry'd it farther than all others: for they did not only worship the Bird Ibis, Hawks, Cats, Dogs, Crocodiles, Sea-horses, Goats, Bulls, Cows, Onions, Garlick, and what not? but <sup>2</sup> they worshipt a Man in the Town of Anubis, in which they sacrific'd to him, and burnt the sacred stuff on the Altars.

αλλα τα μεν ηδικας εχοντα και χρεωδεις αλλας, τα δε ηκ αμοιρα καμψιλος ισεως η φυσικης εστιν. De Isido & Ofiride.

<sup>1</sup> Ipsi illi, qui irridentur, Aegyptii, nullam Belluam, nisi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex ea caperent, consecraverunt. De Nat. Deor. l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Αρδρωπον στυβσιν καλα Ανυβιν καμην, εν η και τρω θυελας, και επι των βωμων τα ιερεια καεσαι. De Abstin. l. 4.

They

They are the words of PORPHYRY. Letter  
III.

9. IN other Countrys some paid a philosophical Worship to the four Elements, and certain parts of the human Body. Other Citys as well as that of Rome were elevated to the high Dignity of Goddeses. And many for fear of offending by mistake erected Altars to unknown Gods. The Romans frankly naturaliz'd those of all other Nations, falling down before such Deities as cou'd not protect their antient Votarys from the Power of their Arms: yet this was rather a politick Liberty of Conscience, than the Effects of any real Devotion. Now from all this it is very evident, not only that the Gods did infinitely exceed Mankind in number as well as in dignity; but that, tho Superstition cou'd be kept within no bounds, yet all Idolatry had its Original from mens Notions and Actions about dead Bodys. But no Absurdity seems greater to me than to find Divinity attributed to Chance, which is directly

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\* Diog. Laert. in Epimenide. Pausan. in Attic. & Lucian. in Philopat.

**Letter** opposite to all Order, Intelligence, and  
**III.** Design: and, nevertheless, under the  
 name of Fortune it had its proper Tem-  
 ples, one dedicated to good, and another  
 to bad Fortune; at the same time re-  
 ceiving Divine Worship, and the most  
 opprobrious Epithets of blind, various,  
 inconstant, true to the worst, and a jilt  
 to the best. These things, as in the  
 Sequel will appear, were introduc'd and  
 invented at second hand; but all occa-  
 sion'd and grounded on the Worship of  
 the Dead.

10. I AM far from designing to  
 bring all the Arguments I cou'd to  
 demonstrate my Opinion about *the Ori-  
 gin of Idolatry*, yet I cannot forbear  
 producing one Example, which shows  
 the utmost Extravagance of human  
 Nature. Tho the generality of Chris-  
 tians have almost made a Martyr of  
 SOCRATES as dying for the Belief  
 of one God, and that the Heathens will  
 have his guilt to have bin for intro-  
 ducing other Gods than the State al-  
 low'd, yet both these Assertions are  
 false: for to his death he adher'd to the  
 Worship of his Country, being of opi-  
 nion that no private Person ought to  
 separate

parate from the publick Establishment; and tho he might believe but e God, yet this was none of the times objected to him by his Accusers his Judges. However, considering e Sentiments of all Men about him, eems scarce credible that this Father good Manners, this Prince of Philosophers, and ablest Physician of the ind, shou'd have divine Honors paid himself after his death, that he shou'd ve a Temple and a Fountain dedicated to his Name. We read, it's true, at the Athenians, repenting of their just Sentence, and to acknowledg his exemplary worth, erected a Statue to perpetuate his Memory : and we know (that is very natural) that his Admirers celebrated his Birth-day, and wore the Fire of his Head about them on Gems in their Rings or Seals. But this Veneration last was carry'd to religious Worship. or MARINUS, the Disciple and Successor of PROCLUS at Athens, who wrote his Master's Life, and who eaks of a thing he knew as well as I to what Saint my Parish-Church is dedicated : MARINUS, I say, relating the happy Presages of PROCLUS's succeeding in the Platonick School, says, that

**Letter III.** that as he arriv'd at the Piræum, N I-  
COLAS, who afterwards grew famous in  
the Art of Declamation, but study'd then  
under the Professors at Athens, went  
down to the Port as to one of his Ac-  
quaintance, to receive and lodg him as  
his Countryman; for NICOLAS was  
likewise a Lycian, and so he conducted  
him into the City. But (PROCLUS),  
finding himself weary after his Voyage,  
sat down by the way in the Chappel of  
SOCRATES (when as yet he neither  
knew nor had heard that SOCRATES  
was honor'd in any place thereabouts)  
and pray'd NICOLAS that he wou'd  
likewise sit down a little, and, if he cou'd  
any where, to help him to some Water:  
The other obeying him, order'd some to be  
brought

---

Ὁς γὰρ εἰς τὸν Πειραιᾶ κατήγε, Νικόλαος, ὁ ὕπα-  
ρον μὲν περὶ φανίης ἐπὶ τῇ σοφιστικῇ γινόμενος, πανταυτίᾳ  
δὲ σχολάζων τοῖς ἐν Ἀθῆναις διδασκαλοῖς, κατέβη εἰς  
τὸν Λιμένα, ὡς πρὸς γυναικίον, ὑπεδεξαμένος ἵε αὐτῷ  
καὶ ξενιστῶν ὡς πολὺν. Λυκίος γὰρ καὶ ὁ Νικόλαος.  
Ἦγεν ἢ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν. Ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆ βασιλῆος  
κοπῆς ἦδετο κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν, καὶ ὅτε το Σοκράτειον, ὅπου  
εἰδὼς καὶ ἀπλοῦς ὅτι Σοκράτης αὐτῷ τε ἐργονοῖο πῦμα;  
ἤξει δὲ τὸν Νικόλαον ἐπιμενεῖν τε αὐτοῦ βραχὺ, καὶ  
καθεζεσθαι, αἶμα δὲ καὶ εἰ εἶχε ποτὲν ὕδωρ αὐτῷ  
ποσεισθαι: καὶ γὰρ διὰ πολλὰ, ὡς εἰσῆν, κατέχευτο.  
Ὁ δὲ ἑτοιμὸς αὐτῷ, καὶ τῷ ἐκ ἀλλὰ χρεὶν ποτὲν,  
εἰ

brought immediately, and that from no other place, but from that same consecrated Ground: for the Fountain of SOCRATES'S Statue was not far from thence. Now, as he was drinking, NICOLAS, who thought of it only just then, said to him, this is a good Omen that you have sat in the Temple of SOCRATES, and that there you drunk the first Attic Water. Then PROCLUS, rising up and worshipping, proceeded on his way to the City. Here you have an Example in all Forms how the Veneration of dead Men becomes excessive in times; and I have chosen to relate it thus at length, because it was most unlikely to happen to SOCRATES, tho more deserving it than any other.

II. I SHOU'D never have done, SERENA, if I wou'd confirm my Opinion by all the Authoritys I cou'd

ἐξ αὐτῆς δὲ ἐμάνη τὴ ἱερὴ χάρις ποιεῖ φερηδαί, καὶ  
καὶ πορρὸν πν ἡ πηγή τῆς Σοκράτους ἐστίν. Πιστὶ δὲ  
αὐτῷ συμβόλον ὁ Νικόλαος, τότε πρῶτον ἐπισκοπεῖ, ὡπν,  
ὡς τῷ Σοκράτει ἐπὶ ἐπιδρυτοῖς, καὶ πρῶτον ἐκιδν  
Ἀττικὸν ὕδωρ πινεῖ. Ὁ δὲ, ἐξαναλαβὼς καὶ ὁρροκυ-  
νησας, ἐπὶ τῷ πάλιν ἐπορεύετο. Marin. in vita Procli,  
Cap. 10. Edit. Lond.

H

produce.

Letter produce. Whoever is conversant in the  
 III. Learning of the Antients, and considers the Accounts they have left us of their own Original as well as that of other Nations, what they have particularly written of their Gods, and the Reasons of their Deification, can have no doubts remaining concerning this matter. But 'tis observable, that according to the degrees of Improvement any Nation made in Politeness, Literature, or Government, the less they were addicted to this impious Humor of God-making. To give an Instance hereof, the Romans deify'd ROMULUS their first King and Founder; but, during those many hundred Years their Commonwealth subsisted, they did not consecrate one Mortal, tho' for Virtue, Knowledg, and Valor, they were furnish'd with more deserving Examples than all the World besides. And yet as soon as ever their free Republick was turn'd into absolute Monarchy, the greatest part of the first Emperors were deify'd; both JULIUS CÆSAR the Subverter of their Liberty, and the most cruel, leud, or foolish of the succeeding Tyrants; with some of their Wives, Relations, and Favorites; imitating

imitating herein the Custom of Kings among the Barbarians, who by such Artifices kept their Subjects in perpetual Slavery, as not daring to rebel against the Gods, or those that were in Election to become such. There's nothing better known in History, than that Princes had Divine Honors paid 'em after Death by the Egyptians, Assyrians, the most antient Greeks, and other Nations. Their Queens also, their Brothers, Sisters, and other Kindred, were made Gods and Goddeses; and it was always the Interest of the succeeding Monarch, to keep up this extraordinary Notion of his Race. Nay Divine Worship was offer'd to many others during their Lives, as well as to AUGUSTUS. PLUTARCH, to whom I might add several more Authors, relates that ARTABANUS, a Persian Lord, said to THEMISTOCLES, then a Fugitive in that Court, *Of the many and good Laws which we have, this is the most excellent, to honor*

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Ἡμῶν δὲ πολλὰν τιμὴν καὶ καλὴν ὄρεσιν κατέ-  
λυστος ἔβρις ἐστὶ, τὸ τιμᾶν βασιλεῖς, καὶ ἀποστελεῖν ἐ-  
κὸνὰ θεῶν. In Themistocle.

**Letter III** *the King, and to worship the Image of God.* No body is ignorant how sacred the Ottoman Race is esteem'd; tho this, as we see, cannot always preserve 'em from the Fury of their insolent Guards or of their injur'd Subjects. The Divine Right claim'd of late by some Christian Kings, and the unreserv'd and passive Obedience pretended by their flattering Clergy to be due to them, if not a better Expedient to support Tyranny than that of the Heathens, yet they were unquestionably intended for the same end and purpose. But the wiser Men grew, the less they believ'd of these things; on the contrary the more narrowly they watch'd their Princes, the more jealous they became of their Liberty and Privileges. Religion and Reason are hated Obstacles to Superstition and Error; and CICERO remarks that some Oracles ceas'd to give Responses in his time, because People were grown less credulous.

12. **HAVING** hitherto explain'd and establish'd the Origin of Idolatry, I shall now, **MADAM**, conformably to these Principles, assign the Reasons  
of

of the Heathen Rites, if you'll allow any Reason to be given for Practices in many cases very absurd and extravagant. Men thinking to please their God (whoever he was among so many) as they were wont to do while a Prince on Earth, erected magnificent Temples or Palaces, and on sumptuous Tables or Altars they made Feasts or Sacrifices to him ; imagining that he and his Court (principally compos'd of their deceas'd Heroes) did feed on the Blood and Fumes of slaughter'd Animals, and delight their celestial Nostrials with snuffing up the Fragrancy of Incense, as they did their sacred Eyes with Pomp and Shows. All the Attendance was suitable to their State and Dignity when living. Solemn Times or Holy-days were set apart from ordinary Labor for the Celebration of the Feast ; and those, whom afterwards they call'd their Priests (whose business was to order the Feast, to serve the Company, and to repeat a Panegyrick in Commemoration of the deify'd Mortal) were clad in splendid Garments, and endow'd with several commodious Privileges, as the Servants of Princes always are ; but the chiefest at the be-

Letter  
III.

Letter ginning were an Exemption from every other Duty to the Publick, and plentiful Salarys assign'd for their Livelihood. There was likewise at these Feasts, good store of Musick, Dancing, Perfuming, Illuminations, Bowings, Cringings, Prostrations, and every thing besides that is usually imploy'd to gratify the Senses of the most vain or licentious Prince; but cou'd never be thought acceptable to any Divine Being, without placing the Origin of Idolatry in the Worship of the Dead; which makes such Worship and Ceremonys very accountable.

13. AS they did with the Ministers of their Princes, so they must make an Interest both with the Courtiers in Heaven and with the Priests on Earth; not only bribing them for their Intercession, but if they wou'd not favor, at least not to oppose their Petitions: for they were commonly of different Factions above as well as below. But you must understand that the Power of these Courtiers was of no small moment, the Government and Protection of all Regions and Citys, particularly of those where they liv'd or govern'd themselves, being distributed

tributed among 'em. There was neither Tree nor Plant ; nor Beast, Fish, or Fowl ; nor River, Fountain, nor Hill ; nor almost any other Creature, but was the special Care and Delight of one or other of them, and frequently call'd after their Names, as in their Life-time they happen'd to use, or love, or admire them. This immediate Direction they were thought to have on the Things now mention'd, as well as over the Diseases of the Body and the Passions of the Mind, gave a Reputation and Authority to their pretended Miracles, Apparitions, Divinations, Oracles, and all other Arts of the Cunning, to drain the Pockets of the Credulous.

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14. AS for the Sanctuarys and the secret Arks kept in them, with their many mysterious Doings, their Expiations, Purifications, and other ridiculous, profane, or cruel Ceremonys, and all very burdensom ; these, I say, were at the beginning symbolical, representing the true History of the Gods while living on Earth, exhibiting the Reasons of their Deification, and the Arks in particular containing the Emblems, Marks, or Tokens of the whole Fact, as all a

Letter gree who have look'd into the Heathen  
 III. Mysterys. But these things were after-  
 wards manag'd by the Priests so as to  
 make their imagin'd Intimacy with  
 Heaven more valu'd, and to get Re-  
 venues settled on themselves, propor-  
 tionable to the Laboriousness and Import-  
 tance of the Service in which they were  
 engag'd. Nor did the Multitude of  
 the Rites serve a little to amuse and di-  
 stract the Vulgar from reflecting on  
 matters with more consideration, their  
 whole Time being almost employ'd a-  
 bout them: besides that they must  
 needs entertain a high Opinion of them,  
 who cou'd affix Sanctity to Times, Pla-  
 ces, and Persons, and to such things as  
 were either indifferent in their own Na-  
 tures, or seem'd the farthest imaginable  
 from being religious. Moreover, there  
 was not wanting sometimes a mutual  
 Compact between the Prince and the  
 Priest, whereby the former oblig'd him-  
 self to secure all these Advantages to the  
 latter, if he in return would preach up  
 his absolute Power over the People, on  
 whose well-meaning Understandings he  
 cou'd make what Impressions he pleas'd  
 at any time.



15. TO the Authority of Princes they added their own Inventions about Hell (as I shew'd before in this Letter, and also in the last I sent you) not contenting themselves to terrify Men with Ice and Flames, deep Mire and Darkness, they added Vultures, Rolling-Stones, Wheels, and Chains; Hydras, Centaurs, Harpies, Chimeras, Sphynxes, Gorgons, Dragons, and a World of other Monsters, the Executioners of the Princes Tyranny. They told 'em also of Ghosts and Specters, Visions and Voices, amazing the Vulgar with the tremendous Sounds of Tartarus, Erebus, the black and roaring Waves of

*Styx, Acheron, Phlegethon, Lethe, Cocytus, Averna.*

with the hideous barking of triple-headed CERBERUS, the dogged Sullenness of CHARON the Ferryman: but the inexorable Furies, ALLECTO, TISIPHONE, and MEGERA, were more dreaded by far than PLUTO or PROSERPINA, tho' Sovereign Governors over those infernal Regions.

From

**Letter III.** From what I said before about the Origin of Ghosts and Astrology, you may be sure they were addicted to all manner of Divination and Magick, such as Augurys and Auspicys, Extispicys, Necromancy and Necyomancy, Pyromancy, Psychomancy, Nephelomancy, Hydromancy, Capnomancy, Sortileges, with other numberless and superstitious Vanities, which are continu'd in most parts of the World to this very Time, and which may be found describ'd at large in *VANDALE*. We may imagin, from the same Reasons, that they abounded with Witches, Sorcerers, and Fortune-tellers, who, by virtue of a Covenant or Compact with the Dæmons, by their Knowledg of the

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Divining by Birds and Signs. By the Entrails of Animals. By the Dead and Ghosts. By Fire. By Souls. By the Clouds. By Water. By Smoak. By Lots, whether in Passages of Books or otherwise.

Quis labor hic superis, Cantus Herbasque sequendi  
Sperandiq; Timor? Cujus Commercia PACTI  
Obstrictos habuere Deos? Parere necesse est,  
An iuvet? Ignota tantum pietate merentur,  
An tacitis valere minis? Hoc Juris in omnes  
Est illis superos? An habent hæc Carmina cæcæ  
Imperiosa Deum, qui Mundum cogere, quicquid  
Cogitur ipse, potest? *Lucan. Pharsal. l. 6.*

Stars,

Stars, and by the occult Qualities of certain Herbs, Stones, barbarous Words, and Charms, and by pricking, or melting, or burying the Images of the Partys concern'd, pretended to make the Gods appear, and to raise the Ghosts of the Dead; to darken the Sun and Moon, and make the Planets more backward, nay to bring down the Stars from the Firmament; to transform themselves and others into various Shapes; to afflict whom they pleas'd with Distempers; procure Love or Hatred; foretel future Events; discover hidden Treasures; spirit away Peoples Corn, or Milk, or other Goods; change little Children in their Cradles; and a thousand more such Pranks, tedious to relate, and impossible for thinking Men to believe. But what the Learned and the Prudent thought of all these Pretenders to extraordinary Knowledge, old ENNIUS will frankly tell you in his rugged Measures.

Letter  
III.



*I value not one rish a Marſian Augur,*

*Nor*

---

*Non habeo denique nauci Marſum Augurem,*

*Non*



# *The Origin of Idolatry,*

*Nor Country Fortunetellers, nor  
Town Star-gazers,*

*Nor Juggling-Gypsies, nor yet Dream-  
Interpreters :*

*For not by Skill or Art are these Di-  
viners ;*

*But superstitious Prophets, Gueßers  
impudent,*

*Or idle Rogues, or craz'd, or mere  
starving Beggars.*

*They know no way themselves, yet  
others would direct ;*

*And crave a Groat of those, to whom  
they promise Riches,*

*Thence let 'em take the Groat, and  
give back all the rest.*

We may add here the fabulous Storys  
of the Heathens (much like our modern  
Tales of Fairys) concerning their Syl-  
vans, Fauns and Satyrs ; their Larvæ

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Non vicinos Atruspices, non de circo Astrologos,  
Non Ifiacos Conjectores, non Interpretes Somnium :  
Non enim sunt ii aut scientia aut arte Divini,  
Sed superstitiosi Vates, impudentesq; Harioli,  
Aut inertes, aut insani, aut quibus Egestas imperat ;  
Qui sibi semitam non sapiunt, alteri monstrant viam,  
Quibus divitias pollicentur ab iis Drachmam ipsi petunt,  
De his divitiis sibi deducunt Drachmam, reddunt  
cetera.

*Cic. de Divinat. lib. 1.*

and

and Lemures; their Nymphs of the Letter  
Seas, Rivers, Fountains, Hills, and III.  
Woods, such as the Nereids, Naiads,   
Dryads, Hamadryads, Oreads, and if  
there be any more like to these, only fit  
to scare Women and Children.

16. LET's now return, if you  
please, to the higher Powers; for as in  
Life so after Death they were of several  
Orders, Gods of the upper, and Gods  
of the lower Form, the Nobility and  
Commons, as also intermediate, in-  
ferior, and vagabond Dæmons (origi-  
nally from the Supposition of departed  
Souls) who had no certain Habitation;  
but wander'd in the Air, and were con-  
stantly sent on Errands, either to carry  
the Prayers of Men to their Superiors,  
or to acquaint the World with the  
Wrath or Favor of the Gods, where-  
of they were commonly thought to be  
the Ministers and Executioners, for  
those Princes had their Armys in Hea-  
ven as well as on Earth. But as the

- 
- Dii majorum Gentium.
  - Dii minorum Gentium.
  - Dii mediocritati, &c.

Hea-

**Letter** Heathens sent the best of their Gods to  
**III.** Heaven, so they recall'd 'em again at  
 ~~~~~ their Pleasure, confining their Presence  
 to some small Chappel, or to the poor  
 Idol within that: for they imagin'd  
 that many of them liv'd in Tombs or  
 wander'd in the Air, before they help'd  
 'em to those Accommodations, where  
 the Desires of their Petitioners were  
 more agreeably heard than in any other  
 place. They often fell down before  
 the Work of their own Hands, which,  
 had it Life or Reflection, ought rather  
 to worship them from whole Skill all  
 its Excellency had bin deriv'd: but the  
 wiser Mice, Swallows, and Spiders made  
 very bold with their Statues, notwith-  
 standing the virtue of Consecration,  
 while silly Men were forc'd themselves  
 to protect what they fear'd and ador'd.  
 These very Statues are an Argument of  
 their human Figure and Original, and  
 we know the respect that was paid to  
 the Statues, even of living Princes.  
 Their Shrines were often visited by the  
 most ignorant and devout, who also  
 hung the Temples round with Offerings  
 and rich Presents, consulted the Oracles  
 in all dubious Events, bound them-  
 selves by Vows in their Distress, believ'd  
 their

their very Dreams to be divinely inspir'd, and made their Religion in every respect as troublefom to others as to themselves. From what they practis'd on Earth, there was not a darling Passion or Game of their great Men (such as drinking, wenching, or hunting) but the like were ascrib'd to the Gods. Wherefore we often read of their Amours, Marriages, Rapes and Adulterys; their Diffensions, Revelings, Quarrels, and Wounds; their Revenges and Thefts; their Complaints and manifold Distresses, being sometimes exps'd, at other times imprison'd, and once fairly beaten out of their Cittadel in Heaven by the Giants, to seek in a pitiful manner for shelter on Earth; all which things demonstrate their Earthly Original. We need not wonder after this to find, that they are always represented in the State wherein they dy'd, and with all the distinguishing Marks in which they liv'd. Thus are some of 'em ever old, and others ever young; Parents, Children, and Relations; some lame and blind, of different Colours and Appetites; some cloven-footed (whence the present vulgar notion of the Devil) some furnish'd with

Letter with Wings, or arm'd with Swords,  
 III.  Spears, Helmets, Clubs, Forks and  
 Bows; or drawn in their Chariots by  
 Lions, Tygers, Horses, Sea-calves, Pea-  
 cocks, and Doves. Now all these  
 things were partly borrow'd from their  
 true History, and are partly allegorical,  
 poetical, and fabulous Disguises of what  
 is no longer perfectly known nor under-  
 stood.

17. **ÆNOMAEUS**, **EMMENAEUS**, **LUCIAN**, and many other Per-  
 sons who made Use of their Rea-  
 son, did fearlessly mock the Deities for  
 being naturaliz'd of this or that Place,  
 where they exercis'd every one the  
 Trade wherein he excell'd. Thus  
**APOLLO** had an Office of Intelligence,  
 and told Fortunes at Delphos; **ESCULAPIDUS** set up an Apothecary's Shop  
 at Pergamus; **VENUS** kept a noted  
 Bawdyhouse at Paphos; **VULCAN**  
 had a Blacksmith's Forge in Lemnos;  
 some were Midwives, some Huntresses,  
 and all of them traffick'd where they  
 cou'd: for they us'd, like us Mortals,  
 such as they had formerly bin, when  
 they did not thrive in one place, to re-  
 move into some other more convenient  
 for

for their Business. As all Events were believ'd to be the Effects of their Love or Displeasure, so Men found out several Methods to thank or appease them; and particularly gave 'em (by way of acknowledgment for the rest) the First-Fruits of all Productions, whether of Animals or Vegetables, with Tythes and other Offerings which they were bound to pay to their Living Princes. Nor was there any thing almost that came amiss in their Sacrifices; for what was the aversion of one prov'd the delight of another, and some of 'em would be content with nothing under human Victims, an Argument of their bloody Disposition in this World. We often find them highly resenting the Affront, (as Princes and Great Men use to do) when their Altars were neglected, especially if the People feasted other Gods; and Men have not less frequently in their Turns reproach'd the Divine Powers with Ingratitude, and even outrag'd their Statues (being sometimes inclin'd to Rebellion) when they thought themselves not sufficiently requir'd for the rich Presents or Bribes which they gave them.

Letter

III.

18. BUT tho the more learned and virtuous had many times better Notions of Things, yet we find the Sentiments of some of 'em mighty fluctuating and obscure, principally occasion'd by the Persecution that was sure to attend the Truth, or any attempt towards a general Reformation, witness the Death of SOCRATES. We may observe from ' PLUTARCH, that the true Reason why the Theory of the Stars and Planets was so little, or at least not so generally known, was, that the common People wou'd never endure to hear those things made subject to a Philosophical Examination, or explain'd by the ordinary Laws of Nature, by involuntary Causes, and blind Facultys, while they held 'em to be intelligent, eternal, and immortal Gods. And therefore when ANAXAGORAS discover'd that the Moon had but a bor-

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Οὐδὲ ὁ λόγος ἐνδοξεῖσσι, ἀλλ' ἀπορρητός ἐστι καὶ δι' ὀλίγων, καὶ μετ' εὐλαβείας τινῶν ἢ πίστεως βαδίζουσιν; καὶ οἱ πνεύοντες τὰς φύσεις καὶ μεταστροφάς τότε καλλίματοι, ὡς εἰς αἰτίας ἀλογὰς καὶ δυνάμεις ἀπρόνοητους, καὶ κατὰ νουθεσίαν πᾶσι, διατρέχοντες τὸ δέον. In vita Nicæ.

row'd

row'd Light from the Sun, and so gave the Reasons of its Wax and Wane, such a Doctrine durst not be made publick, but was secretly communicated to very few, and even to them under a Promise of Fidelity. Indeed a great many eminent Persons in Europe and Asia, both understood themselves the Origin of the Religions commonly receiv'd, and sometimes have dar'd to discover their Vanity, Insufficiency, and Imposture to others. But such as at any time thus asserted the Unity of the Deity, and expos'd Superstition, we ought not to reckon for Heathens, by which Expression is properly understood Idolaters who believe a plurality of Gods, and that pretend to have particular Revelations from them, with several sorts of Rites instituted to their Honor as they were thought to act in distinct Provinces, or else to commemorate their particular Actions. The Jews (who thought all the People of the World, but themselves, to be of this kind) usually call'd 'em the Nations, from the Greek whereof we have the word Heathens, and Gentiles from the Latin. All those therefore who had Penetration enough to discover, and Courage to op-

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pose the Folly or Craft of this Theology, were call'd and reputed Atheists, and treated as such by the Multitude at the Instigation of the Priests. Several Persons, especially among the Philosophers, were fin'd and imprison'd, some were sent into Exile, others judicially sentenc'd to Death, many torn in pieces by the Rabble, and all of them constantly branded with Impiety for disbelieving the Mysterys, or exposing the Holy Cheats of their Times. But no thanks are due to the Heathen Priests, that fewer Instances of this kind occur among them than the Christians: for, besides that most of the Heathen Priests differ'd little from Civil Magistrates, and that many of them did not continue in their Office for Life, they were likewise in perfect subjection to the State: whereas the Christian Priests (except in a very few Protestant Countrys) overtop the Government, and are every where absolute Masters of the Understanding of the Laity. In our Discourses therefore of the Antients, we are to ascribe their sound Notions or moral Practices to the Light of Reason, whereof Heathenism was a notorious Corruption. For want of observing this Distinction,

tion, there are infinite Mistakes committed. One rashly maintains that Heathenism was a better Foundation for Virtue than Christianity, whereas he ought to have said no more (at most) than that the Law of Nature was often better fulfilPd by Heathens than Christians. Another thinks all those to have bin Idolaters who liv'd when Heathenism prevail'd, than which there cannot be a grosser Error. Can any Man be so stupid as to count C I C E R O (for example) a Heathen, who, in his admirable Treatises of *Divination* and of *the Nature of the Gods*, has demonstratively subverted their Polytheism, Sacrifices, pretended Revelations, Prophecys, and Miracles; their Oracles, Augurys, Oneirocriticks, Incantations, and all Popperys of the like sort? M I N U T I U S F E L I X, T E R T U L L I A N, and other Primitive Apologists for Christianity, transcrib'd their best Arguments against Heathenism out of these and the like Books, and very often in the same words. A R N O B I U S, after doing Justice to others,

Letter maintains, that if 'TULLY's Works  
 III. were read, the Christians need not  
 trouble themselves with Writing; and,  
 after acknowledging that he did with  
 much Ingenuity, Constancy, Boldness,  
 and greater Piety explode the Gods, tells  
 us that many Heathens did for that rea-  
 son not only decry those Books, and  
 avoid reading them; but were also for  
 soliciting the Senate to burn and abo-  
 lish them: whereas, to use the judicious

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<sup>1</sup> Quem quidem locum plene jamdudum homines  
 pectoris vivi, tam Romanis Literis explicavere, quam  
 Gracis, & ante omnes Tullius, Romani discretissimus  
 Generis, nullam veritus Impietatis Invidiam, ingenne,  
 constanter, & libere, quid super tali Opinatione senti-  
 ret, pietate cum majore monstravit. A quo si res  
 sumere Judicii veritate conscriptas, non verborum Lu-  
 culentias pergeretis, probata esset & hæc Causa, nec se-  
 cundas (ut dicitur) actiones nobis ab Infantibus postu-  
 larer. Sed quid aucupia verborum, splendoremque ser-  
 monis peti ab hoc dicam, cum sciam esse non paucos  
 qui averfentur & fugiant Libros de hoc ejus, nec in  
 aurem velint admittere Lektionem Opinionum suarum  
 præsumpta vincentem? Cumque alios audiam mustitare  
 indignanter & dicere, oportere statui per Senatum abo-  
 leantur ut hæc scripta, quibus Christiana Religio com-  
 probetur, & vetustatis opprimatur auctoritas? Quinimo  
 si fidei exploratum vos dicere quicquam de Diis vestris.  
 Erroris convincite Ciceronem; temeraria & impia dic-  
 titare refellitote, redarguite, comprobate: nam inter-  
 cipere scripta, & publicatam velle submergere Lektio-  
 nem, non est Deos defendere, sed veritatis Testificatio-  
 nem timere. *Lib. 3. adversus Gent.*

words

words of our Author, *to suppress those Books, or to prohibit the publick reading of them, was not to defend the Gods, but to fear the Testimony of Truth.* I cou'd name a great number of other Persons remarkable for their Valor, Piety, or Justice, who were much farther from being Idolaters than their Accusers; and shou'd no more be denominated Heathens, than those can be now call Mahometans, who, tho living at Mecca, disbelieve the Alcoran. Now, such as will have these to be Mahometans, or those to be Heathens, plainly show their Ignorance of what is meant by the Words, or that they perceive not the Distinction between the Law of Nature and all positive Institutions.

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19. TO be short, M A D A M, the Religion of the Gentiles (as contrary or superadded to the Light of Reason) is such as cou'd not influence Virtue or Morality very much in this Life, nor afford any certain Hopes or Security against the Terror of Death. 'Tis true, there were many among the Heathens, who, loath to believe their Religion so groundless and ridiculous as

Letter it seem'd to appear, especially from the  
 III. Descriptions of the Poets, wou'd have  
 ~~~~~ their numberless Gods to be nothing else  
 but the various Appellations, Attrib-  
 utes, or Provinces of some one Being,  
 whether it were the Sun, or BAC-  
 CHUS, or any God besides, of whom  
 they had a better Opinion. Legislators  
 did put the best face they cou'd upon the  
 matter, and, without anxious Inquiry  
 into the Truth or Falshood of things,  
 they approv'd of all that contributed to  
 keep Mankind in order, that excited  
 'em to Virtue by Example and Re-  
 wards, that deter'd 'em from Vice by  
 Punishments and Disgrace. But others,  
 as the well-meaning Philosophers, alle-  
 goriz'd all their Doctrins into mere na-  
 tural things, wherein the Deity mani-  
 fests his Efficacy, Bounty, or Goodness;  
 from which threefold Consideration  
 proceeded the famous Distinction of  
 their Poetical, Political, and Philoso-  
 phical Theology. Yet the more dis-  
 cerning Persons laugh'd at these Shifts,  
 well knowing that it was impossible to  
 make any tolerable Apology for most of  
 their Fables. CICERO therefore  
 condemns the Stoicks for pretending  
 that all the Greek Theology was  
 mysterious.

mysterious. First ZENO, says he, <sup>Letter</sup> after him CLEANTHES, and then <sup>III!</sup> CHRYSIPPUS, were at great pains to no purpose, to give a reasonable Explication of commentitious Fables, and to account for the Etymology of the very Names of every God: which proceeding plainly shows that they believe not the Truth of these things in the literal sense. However, to give a Specimen of their Allégorys, they made JUPITER and JUNO, to signify the Air and Clouds; NEPTUNE and THETIS, the Sea and Flouds; CERES and BACCHUS, the Earth and all its Productions; MERCURY and MINERVA, the ingenious Talents of the Mind, as Learning, Merchandize, Arts, or the like; CUPID and VENUS, our earnest Desires and amorous Inclinations; MARS and BELLONA, Diffensions and Wars; PLUTO and PROSERPINA,

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<sup>1</sup> Magnam molestiam suscepit, ac minime necessariam, primus Zeno, post Cleanthes, deinde Chrysippus, commentitiarum fabularum reddere rationem: vocabulorum, cur quique ita appellati sint, causas explicare. Quod cum facitis, illud profecto confitemini, longe aliter rem se habere atque hominum opinio sit. *De Nat. Deor. l. 3.*

Letter Mines, Treasures, and whatever lies

III. conceal'd under ground. So they proceeded to explain away the rest of the Gods; and, as Allegorys are as fruitful as our Imaginations, scarce any two Authors cou'd wholly agree in their Opinions. But supposing the Truth of the matter had bin as any or all of 'em wou'd have it, yet their Religion was not a whit the better, and deserv'd to be abolish'd; since, whatever were the Speculations of a few among the Learned, 'tis evident that the Vulgar took all these to be very real Gods, of whom they stood in mighty fear, and to whom they paid Divine Adoration: not to insist on the Trouble and Expensiveness of their Rites, or the Cheats and Dominion of the Priests. This was clearly perceiv'd by C I C E R O, who, enumerating the several kinds of the Heathen Gods, *From another Reason,* says he, *and indeed a physical one, has proceeded a great multitude of Gods, which, being intro-*

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<sup>1</sup> Alia quoque ex ratione, & quidem physica, magna fluxit multitudo Deorum, qui, inducti specie humana, fabulas Poetis suppeditaverunt, hominum autem vitam superstitione omni refererunt. *De Nat. Deor. l. 2.*

*duc'd under human Shape, have supply'd the Poets with Fables, but at the same time have fill'd the Life of Men with all sorts of Superstition.* The same may be as truly said of the modern Saints and Images: for notwithstanding the nice Distinctions of supreme and absolute, of inferior and relative Worship; all the common People are downright gross Idolaters; and as to the multitude of their Observations, the Impostures or Power of their Clergy in the places where this Worship is establish'd, the Superstitions of the whole World put together wou'd, in respect of them, make a very easy and tolerable Religion. Nor ought we to forget that this new Idolatry of the Christians is altogether ground-  
ed, as that of the ancient Heathens,  
on the excessive Veneration of dead  
Men and Women; but improv'd by  
degrees to such a pitch by the Arti-  
fices of the Priests, who allure others  
by this example to follow their Di-  
rections, which always tend to the In-  
crease of their own Glory, Power, and  
Profit.

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Letter

III



20. THE present Heathens, who inhabit the greatest part of Africa, vast Tracts of Asia, almost all America, and some few Corners of Europe, agree very much with the Antients in their Opinions, which is the reason that I have hitherto omitted some things I mention under this Head, to avoid Repetition. But they disagree among themselves in different places, as the Antients did. They have their several Cosmogonias, or Accounts of the Creation of the World; and their Theogonias, or Genealogys of the Gods, whom some hold to be coequal, others subordinate, some to be all good, others again to be all bad: and many that there are two sovereign Principles of Good and Ill, such as the OROMAZDES and ARIMANES of the old Chaldeans: nor are there wanting who maintain the Divine Unity, sometimes with, and sometimes without inferior Ministers; as there be who assert the Eternity and Immensity of the Universe, and that all things happen by an irresistible Decree of Fate. Their Sentiments are as different about Providence, the Duration of the World,

World, and a future State, whether the Soul be immortal, is confin'd after Death to say certain Mansions, or transmigrates, out of one Body into another, this last being the most prevailing Opinion. They diversify their Sacrifices, with numberless Rites and Ceremonies, one Nation worshipping that Animal whereof another makes an Offering to its God; and one Man religiously using that Gesture or Garb, which another rejects as unbecoming and profane: for as JUVENAL observes of the old Egyptians,

*Such is the Madness of the thoughtless Mob,  
Each place adorns the Deity of others,  
And owns no Gods but what themselves adore.*

They perform Divine Service, on the Tops of Hills, in the open Air, or in Temples, and Groves, or Caves.

*Inde furor vulgo, quod Numina victoribus  
Odi: uterque locus, cum sales credat habundor,  
Esse Deos, quos ipse colit.* Sat. 15.

They

**Letter III.** They believe good and bad Demons, and guardian Powers of Places and Men. They have several subordinate Degrees of Priests and Priestesses, Colleges in many parts for their Education, and religious Houses for their Maintenance. They have their sacred Books, Traditions, and Images; pretended Miracles, Prophecys, Revelations, and Oracles; Sorcerys, Augury, Sortileges, Omens, and all sorts of Divination. As they have their Merry-meetings where they eat and drink, sing and dance before their Gods; so they have their more melancholy Seasons, when they not only mortify themselves with strange Austerities of Fasting, Abstinence from Women, coarse Habits, long Pilgrimages; or other laborious Penances: but they also burn and whip, and cut and slash their Bodys in a most cruel manner; vainly imagining to honor or please the Deity by such things as do themselves real hurt, and no body else any good. When the Unintelligibleness or Absurdity of any of their Practices or Doctrins is objected to them, they presently tell you that nothing is impossible

*and Reasons of Heathenism.*

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possible to the higher Powers, and Letter  
that these are Mysterys neither to be **III.**  
fathom'd or examin'd by the finite  
Understanding of Man ; as may be  
read in almost all the Travels of all  
Nations.

21. HAVING given this summary Account, SERENA, of ancient and modern Heathenism, we may remark that almost every Point of those superstitious and idolatrous Religions are in these or grosser Circumstances reviv'd by many Christians in our Western Parts of the World, and by all the Oriental Sects : as Sacrifices, Incense, Lights, Images, Lustrations, Feasts, Musick, Altars, Pilgrimages, Fastings, religious Celibacy and Habits, Consecrations, Divinations, Sorcerys, Omens, Presages, Charms, the Worship of dead Men and Women, a continual Canonization of more, Mediators between God and Men, good and evil Demons, guardian Genius's, Male and Female tutelar Powers to whom they dedicate Temples, appoint Feasts and peculiar Modes of Worship, not only canonizing all Places among 'em, but likewise

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*Natural Religion was easy first and  
plain,*

*Tales made it Mystery, Offerings made  
it Gain;*

*Sacrifices and Shows were at length  
prepar'd,*

*The Priests ate Roast-meat, and the  
People star'd.*

I am afraid, by the time you come thus far, you'll be as weary of reading as I am now of writing; and therefore, MADAM, for both our Ease I shall add no more on this occasion, but that I shall continue all my Life your most sincere and obedient Servant.

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LETTER

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## LETTER IV.

*To a Gentleman in Holland,  
showing SPINOSA'S Sys-  
tem of Philosophy to be  
without any Principle or  
Foundation.*

1. **Y**OU guess very right, SIR,  
when you fancy that in so  
charming a Retirement, I  
injoy the most perfect Happiness this  
Earth can possibly afford, *Health of  
Body and Tranquillity of Mind.* Besides  
the Purity of the Air, this Country  
abounds in all manner of Game; and  
my Neighbors seem wholly unacquaint-  
ed with any other Fraud or Violence,  
than what they use against wild Beasts,  
K 2 Fowl,

Letter Saints, so Men of erroneous Principles  
 IV. have often led excellent Lives; and you  
 know that Monsieur BAYLE, in his  
*various Thoughts upon Comets*, has mani-  
 festly prov'd that even Atheism does  
 not necessarily lead a Man to be wicked;  
 tho he acknowledges withal that the  
 Considerations of Safety, Reputation,  
 and Interest, are not such effectual  
 Restraints against Immorality, as the  
 Doctrins of Religion. I further agree  
 with you that SPINOSA'S Adversa-  
 rys have gain'd nothing on his Dis-  
 ciples by the contumelious and vilifying  
 Epithets they bestow on his Person for  
 the sake of his Opinions; which shame-  
 ful little Artifices are only fit for the  
 Patrons of Error, being contrary to  
 Religion as well as to common Civility,  
 and may well enrage a superstitious  
 Mob, but can never impose on Men of  
 Sense, who judg of things as they are  
 in themselves, and not as represented  
 to them by passionate and unjust An-  
 tagonists.

4. DON'T imagine, Sir, that I  
 express this Moderation either out of  
 Complaisance to the Respect you bear  
 to the Memory of SPINOSA, or that  
 \*

I am now more convinc'd of his Opinions than you formerly us'd to find me : for after this manner it is that I think all Men in the World ought to be treated in matters of mere Speculation, leaving their immoral Actions (if they be guilty of any) to the Care of the Law, and the Animadversion of the Magistrate. But I am so far from being a Profelite to those Points whereof you and I have discours'd at your House, that I am perswaded the whole System of SPINOSA is not only false, but also precarious and without any sort of Foundation. I do not mean that there are no incidental Truths in his Book, no more than that there are no mistakes carelessly crept into those that are better : but I maintain that no such thing follows from his System, which if it be gratuitous and without any Principles, cannot serve to explain any past or future Difficultys, nor to give better Reasons for what we commonly receive.

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5. LET him have bin never so honest a Man, yet I suppose you'l not exempt him from many human Frailtys to which the best are subject : and I am inclin'd to suspect that his chiefest

Letter Weakness was an immoderate Passion

IV. to become the Head of a Sect, to have  
 ~~~~~ Disciples and a new System of Philosophy honor'd with his Name, the Example being fresh and inviting from the good Fortune of his Master **CARTESIUS**. I do not make this Conclusion from his frequent use of such Expressions as *my Philosophy*, or *our System*, and the like: nor wou'd I have every man accus'd of this Affectation who makes some particular Discoverys, or who even changes the whole Face of Philosophy, and introduces a Method absolutely new; for such Persons may without all question be act'd by no other Motives besides the Love of Truth and the Benefit of the Society, nor will they reject any thing but what they really conceive to be hurtful, erroneous, or unprofitable. **SOCRATES**, notwithstanding the mighty Reformation he made in Philosophy, was never suspected to aim at being the Head of a new Sect; and **CICERO** very truly observes that his Disciples multiply'd their Contests, divided into Partys, and spoil'd his Doctrin when they

they form'd it into a System, by which Letter they pretended, no doubt, to explain IV. a thousand things whereof SOCRATES never thought, and to which we find they reduc'd even those airy Speculations which he discarded as useless to Life; expensive of Time, of no concern to the World, and never to be comprehended.

6. BUT when a Man builds a whole System of Philosophy either without any first Principles, or on a precarious Foundation: and afterwards when he's told of this Fault, and put in mind of the Difficultys that attend it, yet neither supplies that Defect, nor accounts for those Difficultys by any thing he has already establish'd, nor yet acknowledges his Mistake; we may reasonably suspect that he's too much in love with his new World (for such is a System of Philo-

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*Illam autem Socraticam Dubitationem de omnibus rebus, & nulla adhibita affirmatione consuetudinem differendi, reliquerunt. Ita facta est differendi (quod minime Socrates probabat) ars quædam, Philosophiæ & rerum ordo, & descriptio disciplinæ. Academicæ. Quæst. I. I.*

sophy)

Letter sophy) ever to admit of a better Creator: whereas a Person that proposes  
 IV.  no other view but the manifesting and propagating of Truth, and that cannot rest satisfy'd with Fancys or Conjectures, wou'd in such Circumstances be nothing ashamed to confess and amend his Error.

7. NOW let's examine whether SPINOSA be guilty of the Charge I have drawn up against him. I shall fairly alledg my Proofs, and leave your self to be Judg, tho you seem so highly prepossess'd in his favor. I need not prove to his greatest Admirer that he acknowledges but one Substance in the Universe, or that the Matter of all the things in the Universe is but one continu'd Being, every where of the same nature, however differently modify'd, and endu'd with unchangeable, essential, and inseparable Attributes. Of these Attributes (which he supposes eternal as well as the Substance to which they belong) he reckons Extension and Cogitation to be the most principal; tho he supposes innumerable others which he has not bin at the pains to name.



ne. He has no where so much as  
nated that Motion was one of  
m; or if he had, we shou'd not  
's believ'd it on his word, nor  
hout more convincing Arguments  
n he has given that every Portion  
l Particle of Matter always thinks:

this is contrary to Reason and  
perience, both which demonstrate  
Extension of Matter. Whatever  
the Principle of Thinking in Ani-  
ls, yet it cannot be perform'd but  
the means of the Brain. We Men  
conscious of no Thoughts, while  
Functions of the Brain are sus-  
ided; we find our selves to think  
re, and there only; and we observe  
signs of Thought in any things that  
nt a Brain, whereas every Creature  
t has one, seems to show some  
gree of Thinking by its Actions.

for his Subtiltys to prove under-  
tence of Reason what is thus re-  
ted by Experience, I may send you  
Thoughts about them another time:

it is not my present Design to con-  
eal his Errors one by one, but to  
w that his whole System is altogether  
undless, which at one stroke de-  
roys whatever is built upon it.

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8. W E agree on every side that the perpetual Changes in Matter are the Effects of Motion, which produces an Infinity of different Figures, Mixtures, and sensible Qualitys. But we must distinguish between local Motion and the moving Force, or Action: for local Motion is only a Change of Situation, or the successive Application of the same Body to the respective Parts of several other Bodys; so that this Motion is nothing different from the Body it self; nor any real Being in Nature, but a mere Mode or Consideration of its Situation, and the Effect of some Force or Action without or within the Body. Tho the ordinary Rules of Motion are but Observations learnt from the Experience of what commonly passes in local Motion, or probable Calculations deduc'd from such Observations; yet the Action or moving Force is likewise often call'd by the name of Motion, and thus the Effect is confounded with the Cause, which has occasion'd a world of Perplexitys, and Absurditys. But all those who have treated of the Diversitys that happen in Matter, must have meant this

\*

Action

Action as their Cause, or labor'd to Letter  
no purpose : for this being once ex- IV.  
plain'd, we can easily account for local Motion as its Effect, and not otherwise.   
The Mathematicians generally take the moving Force for granted, and treat of local Motion as they find it, without giving themselves much trouble about its Original: but the Practice of the Philosophers is otherwise, or rather ought to be so.

9. WHOEVER then goes about to explain by their first Causes the Origin of the World, its present Mechanism, or the Affections of Matter, must begin with the first Cause of Motion: for no manner of Variety is included in the bare Idea of Extension, nor any Cause of Alteration; and seeing it is Action alone that can possibly produce any Change in Extension, this Action or Principle of Motion must be well clear'd and establish'd, or the System must quickly be found defective. If it be only taken for granted, the System will be but a Hypothesis; but if prov'd and explain'd, then we may expect to find some greater Certitude than hitherto in natural Philosophy.  
It

**Letter** It is not enough then to build on local  
**IV.** Motion, which, as we said before, is  
 ~~~~~ but an Effect of this Action, as well as  
 all the other Varietys in Nature: so  
 is Rest, which is now generally ac-  
 knowledg'd to be no Privation nor a  
 State of absolute Inactivity, as much  
 Force being necessary to keep Bodys  
 at rest as to move them; where-  
 fore local Motion and Rest are only  
 relative Terms, perishable Modes, and  
 no positive or real Beings.

10. 'TIS hard to determine what  
 were the true Opinions of the most  
 antient Sages of Greece; but the gene-  
 rality of Philosophers every where  
 since ANAXAGORAS have laid down  
 as a Principle, that Matter being of it  
 self inactive, a dull and heavy Lump,  
 the Divinity (which was acknowledg'd  
 distinct from this Matter) communi-  
 cated Motion to it, tho after a man-  
 ner exceeding human Comprehension.  
 Hence they proceed to show what Di-  
 visions this Motion made in Matter,  
 what Particles of different Bulk and  
 Figure thence were form'd, and how  
 the Universe (I will not say how well)  
 and all the Parts thereof came into their  
 present

present State. SPINOSA, on the contrary, acknowledges no Being separate or different from the Substance of the Universe, no Being to give it Motion, to continue or to preserve it, if it has none of its own. He builds on all the common Notions about local Motion, without ever showing any Cause of it; being not willing to allow the Impulse of a presiding Deity, and unable (as you'll presently perceive) to produce a better, or as good a Reason. Yet he was of opinion that Matter was naturally inactive: for in the second part of his *Ethicks* or System, Proposition the thirteenth, Axiom the first, he says in express terms, '*All Bodys are either in motion or at rest.*' And to let you see that he did not mean respective Rest, or the Resistance of other Bodys, in the Demonstration of the second Lemma he further affirms, that '*all Bodys may sometimes be absolutely mov'd, and sometimes be absolutely at rest.*' There can be nothing more positive: yet if any or all

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\* Omnia Corpora moventur vel quiescunt.

\* Omnia Corpora — absolute jam moveri, jam quiescere possunt.

**Letter** the Parcels of Matter may be in absolute Rest, they must ever persist in that State without some external Cause to put 'em in motion, and this Cause he has no where assign'd ; besides that all Matter may be inactive, if any part of it can ever be so.

**II. SPINOSA** has no where in his System attempted to define Motion or Rest, which is unpardonable in a Philosopher, whether done with or without design ; and yet according to himself in his *Ethicks*, *Motion and Rest are the Causes of all the Diversities among Bodys*, thence *proceeds the distinction of particular Bodys*, and *an Infinity of things proceed from Motion and Rest*. In prosecuting this Subject I shall alledg nothing out of his other

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<sup>1</sup> Corpora ratione motus & quietis, celeritatis & tarditatis, & non ratione substantiæ ab invicem distinguuntur. *Lem. 1. ante Prop. 14. Part. 2.*

<sup>2</sup> Corpora res singulares sunt, quæ ratione motus & quietis ab invicem distinguuntur. *Demonstrat. Lem. 3. ante Prop. 13. Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Non tamen propterea Deus magis dici potest ex libertate voluntatis agere, quam propter ea quæ ex motu & quiete sequuntur (infinita enim ex his etiam sequuntur) dici potest ex libertate motus & quietis agere. *Corol. 2. Prop. 3. Part. 1.*

Books: because that in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* he has had no occasion to treat of these matters; and that in one of his *Epistles* he declares himself not answerable for any thing in his *Demonstration of CARTESIUS's Principles*; and this he oblig'd MEYER the Publisher to tell the world in the Preface of the Book, which he has accordingly done: for he compos'd that Work at the request of one of his Disciples, and built his Demonstrations on CARTESIUS's Definitions, Postulates, and Axioms, which are suppos'd but not believ'd to be true. So that the *Ethicks* (to which Title he has reduc'd all his Philosophy) is his real System, wherein and in his *Letters* his genuine Sentiments of Philosophy are only to be found. After dealing thus fairly with him (which is no more than Justice requires) there's no need of showing by Inferences that he did not hold Motion to be an eternal Attribute of Matter; which if he had done, we cou'd not have believ'd it without good proof: I say, we are spar'd these pains, since he expressly asserts the contrary, and he was surely best able to acquaint us with his own Opinion. In his first Letter

Letter to OLDENBURG, whereby he

IV. communicates to him some part of his  
*Ethicks*, thus he writes. *You must take heed that by Attribute I understand every thing that is conceiv'd by it self and in it self, in such a manner as that the Conception of it does not involve or suppose the Conception of any other thing: as Extension, for example, is conceiv'd by it self and in it self, but Motion not so; for it is conceiv'd to be in another thing, and the Conception of it involves Extension.* This is extremely plain and peremptory; nor shall we examine at present how true or false it may be of Extension, which is but an abstracted Idea, and no more conceivable without a Subject than Motion is.

12. SPINOSA then, who values himself in his *Ethicks* on deducing things from their first Causes (which the Schoolmen term *a priori*) SPINO-

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<sup>1</sup> Ubi notandum me per attributum intelligere omne id quod concipitur per se & in se, adeo ut ipsius Conceptus non involvat Conceptum alterius rei: ut, ex. g. Extensio per se & in se concipitur, at Motus non item; nam concipitur in alio, & ipsius Conceptus involvit Extensionem.

SA, I say, having given no account how Matter came to be mov'd or Motion comes to be continu'd, not allowing God as first Mover, neither proving nor supposing Motion to be an Attribute (but the contrary) nor indeed explaining what Motion is, he cou'd not possibly show how the Diversity of particular Bodys is reconcilable to the Unity of Substance, or to the Sameness of Matter in the whole Universe: wherefore I may safely conclude that his System is intirely precarious and without any sort of ground, indigested and unphilosophical. But lest your Affection shou'd bias you to think that such a great Man cou'd not stumble so at the Threshold, and that he has somewhere supply'd this enormous Defect tho it might escape my Observation, I hope you'll believe his own Words to a Person who wou'd not implicitly swear to his Philosophy, but whose Difference of Opinions did probably make as little Difference in their Affections as in yours and mine. 'Tis a very remarkable thing by what Delays, Shifts, and Excuses he wou'd avoid solving the Objections that were made to him on this Head, which

Letter keeps me still in the Belief that he cou'd  
 IV. not bear to part with his System, nor to  
 ~~~~~ lose the hopes of heading a new Sect.

13. BUT be this how it will (for we ought to be reserv'd in divining the Thoughts or the Dead) the Author of the sixty third Epistle in his *Posthumous Works* presses him by a very sensible and modest Request, which, without a good Answer, overthrows, as we have prov'd, the whole Fabrick of his Philosophy. ' *If you have leisure, says his Friend, and that opportunity permits, I humbly beg of you the true Definition of Motion, as well as the Explication of that Definition: and after what manner (since Extension, as consider'd in it self, is indivisible, immutable, &c.) we can show a priori how such and so many Varietys cou'd begin, and by consequence the Existence of Figures in the Particles of any Body, which*  
 yet

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<sup>1</sup> Si otium est & occasio finit, a te submisisse peto veram Motus definitionem, ut & ejus explicationem; atque qua ratione (cum Extensio, quatenus per se concipitur, indivisibilis, immutabilis, &c. sit) a priori deducere possimus tot tamque multas oriri posse varietates, & per consequens Existentiam figuræ in particulis

yet in every Body are various and different Letter  
from the Figures of the Parts, which con- IV.  
stitute the Form of another Body. Well; ~~~~~  
what says SPINOSA? or does he di-  
rect him to any place where this is al-  
ready done to his hand? Far from it;  
for in the following Epistle he replies  
in these words: 'Now for the rest, that  
is to say, concerning Motion, and such  
things as relate to Method, because they  
are not yet written in Order, I keep 'em  
till another opportunity. His Friend,  
who wou'd not be put off so slightly,  
and whose Thirst after Knowledg made  
him wait with Impatience, brings him  
again in mind of this Difficulty in the  
sixty ninth Epistle: 'I cannot without  
great difficulty conceive, says he, how a  
priori can be prov'd the Existence of Bo-  
dys which have Motions and Figures;

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culis alicujus Corporis, quæ tamen in quovis Corpore  
variz & diversæ sunt a figuris partium quæ alterius  
Corporis formam constituunt.

¹ Cæterum, de reliquis, nimirum de Motu, quæque  
ad methodum spectant, quia nondum ordine conscripta  
sunt, in aliam occasionem reservo.

² Difficiliter admodum concipere quæ, qui a priori  
Corporum existentia demonstratur quæ Motus & Figuræ  
habent; cum in extensione, rem absolute considerando,  
nil tale occurrat.

Letter your self demonstrated how it shou'd ne-

IV. *cessarily follow from the Essence of God a priori; which, CARTESIUS going about to show, he believ'd it to exceed all human Comprehension. Wherefore I intreat this thing of you, well knowing you have other Thoughts, unless perhaps there be some culpable occasion that has hitherto kept you from making this Matter plain.* This Person has done Justice to CARTESIUS; for tho his System is at best but an ingenious Philosophical Romance, yet he was never so careless or inaccurate as to think of deducing the Variety and Difference of particular Bodys from mere Extension, and therefore suppos'd God at the beginning to have given a shake to the lazy Lump, from which his Matters of the first, second, and third Elements successively existed, and from these, after his manner, the Disposition of the whole Universe. But SPINOSA neither supposing the

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essentia Dei a priori necessario sequi debeat, abs te non sit ostensum, id, quod Cartesius ostensusus, Cap-  
 rum humanum superare credebat. Quare a te hanc rem  
 requiro, sciens bene te alias Cogitationes habere, nisi  
 alia fontica subsit forte causa, quare illud hactenus  
 manifestum facere nolueris, &c.

\*

same

same Principle, nor establishing any Letter  
 other to explain the Variety of par- IV.  
 ticular Bodys in the Identity of Sub-  
 stance, you'll own, I doubt not, that  
 without any Artifice, Passion, or In-  
 terest, I have clearly prov'd what I  
 undertook to you, that his Philosophy  
 is built on no certain or probable Foun-  
 dation, but on gratuitous Suppositions,  
 from which he deduces what he and  
 his Followers call Demonstrations. He  
 was accusom'd to this way of pre-  
 tending to demonstrate things in a  
 Geometrical Method, tho he knew 'em  
 to be false, since thus he had before  
 demonstrated CARTESIUS's Princi-  
 ples. But that very Work is a memo-  
 rable Example how easily People may  
 be deceiv'd by this Method (tho in it  
 self absolutely certain) if they are not  
 us'd to make long Deductions without  
 missing one Link in the Chain, if they  
 take any thing for self evident which  
 needs it self to be prov'd, or any thing  
 for prov'd from the Authority of others  
 or their own Prepossessions. But to  
 return to his Friend, all the Answer  
 he receiv'd to his last Intreaty was  
 in general words; for in the two and  
 seventieth Epistle, SPINOSA after re-  
 jecting

Letter tion is Motion, only diversifying their  
 IV: Terms a little; for when a Bowl runs  
 on the Green, and the Definition of  
 Motion is ask'd, 'tis gravely answer'd,  
 that *it is the removing of one Body*  
*from the Neighborhood of others, &c.*  
 and this the Bowlers know as well  
 as the Philosopher, seeing it daily with  
 their own Eyes; but 'tis the Cause  
 of this Effect they desire to hear ex-  
 plain'd, of which he's ordinarily as  
 ignorant as they.

15. Y. O U say very truly that even  
 those who carefully distinguish the  
 Cause and the Effect, are yet extreme-  
 ly puzzl'd about the *moving Force* it  
 self, what sort of Being it is; where  
 it resides, in Matter or without it;  
 by what means it can move Matter;  
 how it passes from one Body to ano-  
 ther; or is divided between many  
 Bodys while others are at rest, and a  
 thousand more such Riddles. Where-  
 fore not being able to discover any  
 such real Being in Nature, nor to de-  
 termin whether it be a Body or Spi-  
 rit, and yet less to make it a Mode,  
 since (among other Objections) no  
 Accident can pass from one Subject  
 to

to another, nor be without its particular Cause in any Subject whatsoever, and that it may be intirely destroy'd the Subject remaining safe, they are forc'd at last to have recourse to God, and to maintain that as he communicated Motion to Matter at the beginning, so he still begets and continues it whenever, and as long as there's occasion for it, and that he actually concurs to every Motion in the Universe. But this System is subject to more fatal Consequences than those they wou'd avoid by it: for besides that they hereby destroy what many have said about God's impressing Motion on Matter at the beginning, as something that was of it self sufficient for the future; they farther make God the Author of all the Wickedness in Nature, tho Motion were still but a Mode. 'Tis he, for example, that actually moves the Tongue of a lying Witness, the Hand and Dagger of a Murderer, with such other palpable Difficultys, which all their moral and physical Distinctions are not able to solve. But why shou'd I throw away any Words on this System, since in all times, as C I C E R O observes, when the Philosophers

Letter sophers are ignorant of the Cause of  
 IV. any thing, they presently betake them-  
 ~~~~~ selves for refuge and sanctuary to God,  
 which is not to explain things, but to  
 cover their own Negligence or Short-  
 sightedness, their Vanity not suffering  
 them to allow any other Cause, but  
 God's immediate Concourse to what  
 they are not able to unfold.

16. YOU do not foresee perhaps  
 what Doubts you create to your self,  
 and what Work you cut out for me,  
 in demanding my particular Opinion  
 about Motion. 'Tis easier at any  
 time to find out the Defects of others  
 than to supply them, and a Man is  
 very like to be wrong understood  
 who delivers his Opinion (especially  
 if altogether new) before it be guard-  
 ed with its Proofs and Explication:  
 but our Friendship not allowing me  
 to deny you any thing in my power,  
 I shall be open and free with you in  
 this particular. I hold then that *Mo-*

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\* Sed omnium talium rerum ratio reddenda est:  
 quod vos, cum facere non potestis, tanquam in aram  
 confugitis ad Deum. *De Nat. Deor. l. 3.*

tion is essential to *Matter*, that is to Letter  
say, as inseparable from its Nature as IV.  
Impenetrability or Extension, and that  
it ought to make a part of its Defi-  
nition. But as in *Matter* we distin-  
guish the *Quantity* of particular Bodies  
and the *Extension* of the whole, of  
which these Quantitys are but several  
Determinations or Modes, existing  
and perishing by their several Causes:  
so, the better to be understood, I  
wou'd have this Motion of the Whole  
be call'd *Action*, and all local Motions, as  
direct or circular, fast or slow, simple  
or compounded, be still call'd *Motion*,  
being only the several changeable *De-*  
*terminations* of the *Action* which is al-  
ways in the Whole, and in every Part  
of the same, and without which it  
cou'd not receive any Modifications.  
I deny that *Matter* is or ever was an  
inactive dead Lump in absolute Re-  
pose, a lazy and unweildy thing; and  
when I write expressly on this Subject  
to you, I hope to evince that this  
Notion alone accounts for the same  
Quantity of Motion in the Universe,  
that it alone proves there neither  
needs nor can be any Void, that *Mat-*  
*ter* cannot be truly defin'd without it,  
that

Letter that it solves all the Difficultys about the  
 IV: moving Force, and all the rest which  
 we have mention'd before.

17. BUT you'l say that, besides the Singularity of the Opinion, I shall make a world of Adversarys by reason of the many Hypotheses and Doctrins which it unavoidably destroys. To this I answer, that the Offence is taken, but not given; and that I shall thereby be nothing disquieted, provided I be able to contribute any thing towards the Discovery of Truth. This is not a System of Accommodation, such as those which some invent to reconcile other different Systems, tho they are not certain that their own is more true than the rest. But if I be able to prove from the nature of the thing it self, and not to favor or oppose any Cause, that *Action is essential to Matter*, that Matter cannot be rightly conceiv'd nor consequently be rightly defin'd without it, that nothing can be accounted for in Matter without this essential Action, and that it is easily shown to exist in the most heavy or hard Bodys; then they may quarrel (who have a mind to it) with God

God or Nature, and not with me, who am but their humble Interpreter. After all, I apprehend no Enemys if I shou'd ever publish to the World what I may write to any Friend on this Subject; for every Party is necessitated to explain the Phenomena of Nature by Motion: and therefore such as believe Matter created, may as well conceive that God at the beginning endu'd it with Action as well as with Extension; and those who believe it eternal, may as well believe it eternally active, as eternally divisible; nor can they ever account for any Change in Nature without admitting this, as I have prov'd before against SPINOSA. My only business is to prove *Matter necessarily active as well as extended*, and thence to explain as much as I can of its Affections; but not to meddle in the Disputes which others may raise about its Original or Duration.

Letter  
IV.

18. YOU may perceive, SIR, that I have a great deal of leisure, and nothing to make me uneasy, or at least that I won't be made so, when I can take occasion to write so long a Letter from a few hints in a couple of yours. But it

M

is

Letter is impossible not to acquire a more dilated Understanding by your Correspondence. After so much Philosophy about the Primitive World, I shall trouble you with nothing that passes in the present; and I desire this particular favor of you, that in the Letters with which you'll please to honor me during my Stay in this Solitude (which I hope will be very many) you wou'd not mention a word of News: for there's something in all such Occurrences, which engages us to interest our selves more than in many Peoples Opinion we are concern'd to do; and yet, according as it goes with publick Affairs, I cannot for my Life refrain from rejoicing; or being angry, or growing sad like others, which perhaps proceeds from very good Reasons, but with which I wou'd not willingly be disquieted here. Still I except from the foregoing Instructions all that regards your Family or our other Friends, in whose Welfare, and particularly in your own, none can receive more real Satisfaction, than, SIR, your most humble and affectionate Servant.

LETTER

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## LETTER V.

Motion essential to Matter;  
*in Answer to some Remarks*  
*by a noble Friend on the*  
 Confutation of SPINOSA.

*Nunc qua mobilitas sit reddita Materiali*  
*Corporibus, paucis licet hinc cognoscere,*  
*Memmi.*                      Lucret. l. 2.

1. **P**ARDON me, SIR, if I  
 doubt whether the favorable  
 Character you are pleas'd to  
 bestow on *the Confutation of SPI-*  
*NOSA*, proceeds from your Kindness  
 M 2                      or

Letter or your Judgment. But what makes  
 V. me flatter my self that you wrote your  
 genuine Thoughts about the first part  
 of that Letter to our worthy Friend, is  
 your making some Objections against  
 the latter part, wherein I have barely  
 declar'd my Opinion; that *Matter is*  
*necessarily active as well as extended.*  
 To this you cannot easily agree, and  
 neither he nor I can blame you for it,  
 unless at the same time we wou'd  
 rashly condemn our selves when  
 we were of your mind. But as our  
 Opinion ought to go for nothing  
 without good Reasons, so we admit  
 of no Right from Possession, of no Pri-  
 vilege by Prescription in Philosophy,  
 how much soever we allow it in na-  
 tional Laws or Customs. Authority is  
 to decide matters of Fact, but not to  
 determine the Truths of Nature. You  
 ventur'd fair, I must acknowledg, to  
 make your Observations and Objections  
 before I gave any notice or hint of my  
 Arguments: but this very Proceeding  
 declares how untenable you believe my  
 Assertion to be, even so unguarded  
 and absurd, that any Person cou'd easi-  
 ly guess at the little that might be  
 plausibly offer'd for such a Paradox.  
 This

This is but a natural Construction of your meaning, and such Thoughts as People are extremely apt to entertain of any Notion that contradicts the common Belief, especially if such a Belief has continu'd very long in possession, and has bin very universally receiv'd. In the Answer you desire of me, I shall follow the Thread of your own Letter; and take care to be as brief, as the indispensable Law of Perspicuity will permit.

2. Y O U take my Meaning very right in urging, that *if Activity ought to enter into the Definition of Matter, it ought likewise to express the Essence thereof*: for certainly all the Propertys of any thing shou'd follow or be knowable from its Definition; else the Definition is not distinguishing and adequate, but confuse and imperfect. In my Opinion therefore Matter has bin hitherto but half, or rather a third part defin'd by Extension, from which alone many of its Modifications can follow by no means; and this is the reason, why none of the motive Effects have bin consider'd as essential to it, but adventitious and of a different sort, because

Letter not contain'd in any of the Terms of  
 V. its Definition: whereas Matter being  
 ~~~~~ defin'd active as well as extended (to  
 which you may add Solidity, with the  
 incomparable Mr. LOCK) then all  
 the motive Effects follow very naturally,  
 and need not be explain'd by any other  
 Cause, no more than the Consequences  
 of Extension. Supposing it an Error  
 that Motion is extraneous to Matter,  
 you'll own that the ordinary Defini-  
 tions which are built upon this Suppo-  
 sition, have greatly contributed to set-  
 tle it firmly in the Minds of men; they  
 being thus accustom'd to deprive Mat-  
 ter of Motion in their Speech and  
 Writing from the beginning, which  
 kept 'em for ever after from revoking  
 it in doubt, but rather making it a self-  
 evident Principle: and you know that  
 such as had designs of gaining Repu-  
 tation by introducing false Doctrins  
 that favor'd their Designs, or of main-  
 taining their Authority in supporting  
 absurd Persuasions already establish'd,  
 did make it a standing Rule that *Prin-  
 ciples must not be disputed*; and then  
 they canoniz'd for Principles, whatever  
 Maxims they found most conducive to  
 their purpose. But if Motion be essen-  
 tial

tial to Matter, it must be likewise as  
essential to its Definition.

Letter  
V.  


3. I O W N what you next object, that *before such a Definition is made, the necessary Activity of Matter ought to be clearly prov'd*, which to do, in the Sequel of this Letter, is my Intention; and to endeavor the recommending of this Definition by the Reasons I shall produce to show that all the Matter in Nature, every Part and Parcel of it, has bin ever in motion, and can never be otherwise; that the Particles which lie in the midst of the most solid and bulky Rocks, in the heart of Iron Bars or Gold Ingots, are as well in constant Action, as those of Fire, or Air, or Water, tho not according to the same Determinations, nor in the same Degrees, no more than these last mention'd, compar'd among themselves: for this Action is equally natural and internal to them all, and to all other Classes of Matter in the Universe; tho their specifick Motions be so various and different, which proceeds from their several ways of affecting one another. But it's time enough to think of a new Definition, when this essen-

Letter tial Motion is evidently prov'd.

V.



4. YOU once thought it inconceivable, it seems, I should ever maintain that *Matter cannot as much as be conceiv'd without an Action of its own, or under some Effect of such an Action*; and I still maintain, that Matter can no more be conceiv'd without Motion than without Extension, and that the one is as inseparable from it as the other. Your conceiving Faculty I know to be much more delicate than mine, wherefore I wou'd have you try it a little on this Subject, and then to make me comprehend what Idea you have fram'd of Matter without Action. It must be something depriv'd of all Figure or Color, neither heavy nor light, rough or smooth, sweet or sour, hot or cold, void (in a word) of all sensible Qualitys, without Parts, Proportion, or any Relation whatsoever: since all these depend immediately on Motion, as well as the Forms of all corporeal Beings, their Generation, Succession, and Corruption, by the numberless Mixtures, Transpositions, and other Arrangements of their Parts, all which are the natural and undoubted Effects

Effects of Motion, or rather Motion it self under these several Names and Determinations. The commonly acknowledged Divisibility of Matter is also an undeniable Argument that it cannot be conceiv'd without Motion, since it is Motion that diversifies or divides it; which is therefore presuppos'd as well as Extension in the Idea of Divisibility, and consequently the one is as essential to Matter as the other. How can you conceive that Matter is any thing or a Substance, unless it be endu'd with Action? How can it be the Subject of Accidents (according to the vulgar Definition) since all Accidents are nothing else but the several Determinations of Action in Matter, diversify'd as they are differently plac'd with relation to our Senses; but in reality not distinct from our Imagination, or from the thing it self wherein they are said to exist? Roundness is nothing different from the round Body (which is as true of all Figures) for this Roundness is not the Name of any real thing, but only a word to express the particular manner of a certain Body. Neither are Hot or Cold, Sounds, Smells, or Colors, so much as even the Man-

Letter Manners or Postures of the things  
 V. themselves, but the Names we give to  
 their ways of affecting our Imagination;  
 for most things are conceiv'd by us  
 with respect to our own Bodys, and not  
 to their true Nature: wherefore what  
 is sweet to one is sour to another, what  
 is rough to me is smooth to you, what  
 is pleasure to the Healthy is pain to  
 the Sick; tho most mens Organs being  
 fram'd very like one another, they are  
 consequently affected much after the  
 same manner, yet still with some de-  
 grees of Difference. But these, and  
 all other Differences in Matter proceed-  
 ing from several Changes, or these very  
 things being but the Conceptions of  
 different Motions, I think I may war-  
 rantably affirm that Matter is never  
 conceiv'd but under some Notion of  
 Action, which before I end I design to  
 show to be as true of Rest it self.  
 Now strip me Matter of Motion (if  
 you can) and I undertake before-hand  
 to divine your Conception of it, which  
 must be the very same with those  
 who try'd such Projects before you: for  
 their *Materia prima* was *qua neque est*  
*quid, neque est quale, neque est quantum,*  
*neque quicquam eorum quibus Ens denomi-*  
*natur;*

*natur*; which is in a great many words to say, that it is nothing at all.

Letter  
V.



5. BUT you affirm that *the Extension of Matter is very easily known, if not self-evident, but not its Activity*; wherein I must beg leave to dissent from you, asserting that the one is no less easy to be known than the other, and neither of 'em doubted or mistaken, but by such as judg of things from Appearances, Custom, or Authority, without consulting their own Reason, arguing in which Method they may as well prove the Moon to be no bigger than a large Cheshire Cheese: for as the Vulgar believe that there is no Extension, where they perceive no visible Object; so those, who wou'd take it ill to be rankt in other things with the Vulgar, yet agree with them in this, thinking that there's no Action, where they can see no local or determinate Motion. Experience shows that great numbers of Adversarys are no Argument against the Truth of any thing whatsoever. The plainest things in the World have bin mighty Secrets for whole Ages; and we know that it's hard to find a thing, where no body dreams

Letter dreams of looking for it. Have a little  
 V. patience, SIR, and I may be so happy  
 as to be capable of showing you what  
 led all Sects of Philosophers as well as  
 the Vulgar, to believe the Sluggishness  
 of Matter, tho' divers of the former  
 were aware of its actual universal Mo-  
 tion, which from the Prejudice of their  
 Infancy, they were ready to ascribe to  
 any Cause rather than to the right one;  
 and this has very often oblig'd 'em to  
 feign very ill-sorted and ridiculous Hy-  
 potheses.

6. I APPROVE of your fourth  
 Observation (for you know I wou'd not  
 easily disagree with you in any thing)  
 that *many of the most learned Philosophers*  
*contend for a Vacuum, which Notion seems*  
*to be grounded on the Deadness or Inacti-*  
*vity of Matter:* to which I add, that  
 some of those Philosophers deny (with the  
 Epicureans) the Void to have any sub-  
 stantial Extension, and will have it to be  
 nothing; while the rest make it an ex-  
 tended Substance, which is neither Body  
 nor Spirit. These Notions have rais'd  
 a world of Disputes about the nature  
 of Space. The Opinion of a Void is  
 one of the numberless erroneous Conse-  
 quences

quences of defining Matter only by Extension, of making it naturally inactive, and of thinking it divided into real Parts every way independent of one another. On these Suppositions it is impossible there shou'd not be a Void; but 'tis as impossible that ten thousand Absurditys shou'd not follow from thence. What we call Parts in Matter, may be prov'd to be but the different Conceptions of its Affections, the distinctions of its Modifications; which Parts are therefore only imaginary or relative, but not real and absolutely divided: for Water, as such, can be generated, divided, and corrupted, increas'd and diminish'd; but not when consider'd as Matter.

ON this occasion, to avoid all Ambiguity, 'tis convenient to inform you, that by Bodys I understand certain Modifications of Matter, conceiv'd by the Mind as so many limited Systems, or particular Quantitys mentally abstracted, but not actually separated from the Extension of the Universe. We therefore say that one Body is bigger or less than another, is broken or dissolv'd, from the multifarious Change of Modifications:

Letter

V.



fications: but we cannot properly say that Matters are bigger one than another, because there's but one sort of Matter in the Universe; and if it be infinitely extended, it can have no absolute Parts independent of one another, Parts and Particles being conceiv'd as I told you just now that Bodys were. A world of other words are invented to help our Imagination, like Scaffolds for the Convenience of the Workmen; but which must be laid aside when the Building is finish'd, and not be mistaken for the Pillars or Foundation. Of this sort are Great and Small, for example, which are but mere Comparisons of the Mind, and not the Names of any positive Subjects; as you are Big in respect of your little Sister, but Little in respect of an Elephant, and she is Big when compar'd to her Parrot, but very Little when she stands by her Mother. These and such words are very serviceable when rightly apply'd; yet they are often abus'd, and from relative or modal, are made real, absolute, and positive: such are Bodys, Parts, Particles, Something, a certain Being, and the like, which may be well allow'd in the Practice of Life, but never in the Specu-

8. BUT to return to your Objection ; others who admitted no real, but only modal and respective Parts in Nature, yet cou'd never with all their Subtilty bring any Arguments against a Void, but what their Adversariys cou'd easily ruin, because they agreed with them in making Matter inactive. You, that understand so well the History of Philosophy, know that the Difficultys appear to be equal on both sides, which has induc'd many to believe that the thing is in its own nature inexplicable, throwing the fault (as they often unjustly do) on their own Conceptions, which they find unsatisfy'd ; and not on the precarious Suppositions of both Partys, which they do not perceive. There is nothing more certain than that of two Contradictories the one must be always true, as the other must be always false ; and tho it be therefore indisputable that either there is a Void, or that all is full (to use their improper Expression) tho it be plain that the Truth is within the narrow Compass of these two short Propositions, yet neither side has bin hitherto

Letter V. therto able to demonstrate which of 'em is the true Opinion, because they have both argu'd from a false Medium, from which nothing but Falsitys and Absurditys cou'd naturally follow.

9. B U T if you are once persuaded, S I R, as I hope you quickly will, that Matter is active as well as extended, all your difficultys about a *Vacuum* must fall to the ground. For as those particular or limited Quantities, which we call such or such Bodys, are but several Modifications of the general Extension of Matter in which they are all contain'd, and which they neither increase nor diminish: so (as an adequate Parallel) all the particular or local Motions of Matter are but the several Determinations of its general Action, directing it this or that way, by these or those Causes, in this or that manner, without giving it any Augmentation or Diminution. Indeed in all Treatises of the ordinary Laws of Motion, you meet with the several degrees of Motion that any Body loses or acquires; but those Laws concern the Quantity of the Action of particular Bodys on  
one

one another, and not the Action of Matter in general; as particular Quantities of Matter are measur'd by other lesser Quantities, but not the Extension of the Whole. The Mathematicians compute the Quantities and Proportions of Motion, as they observe Bodies to act on one another, without troubling themselves about the physical Reasons of what every person allows, being a thing which does not always concern them, and which they leave the Philosophers to explain: tho the latter wou'd succeed better in their Reasons, if they did more acquaint themselves before-hand with the Observations and Facts of the former, as Mr. NEWTON justly observes.

10. THERE is no inseparable Attribute of Matter, but has number-

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\* In Mathematicis investiganda sunt virium Quantitates & Rationes illæ, quæ ex conditionibus quibuscunque positis consequentur: denique ubi in physicam descenditur, conferendæ sunt hæ Rationes cum Phænomenis, ut innotescat quænam virium Conditiones singulis Corporum attractivorum generibus competant; & cum deinceps de virium Speciebus, Causis, & Rationibus Physicis tutius disputare licebit. *Philos. Nat. Princip. Math.* p. 192.

N

less

Letter less Modifications proper to it self as

V. well as Extension. So has Solidity, so has Action; and yet all the Attributes must concur in producing the peculiar Modes of each, because they are still but the Consideration of the self-same Matter under different respects. To say then, as you do after a Croud of Philosophers, that *if there be no Void, there is consequently no place for C to remove into, nor any Elbow-room for B to push C*; for you, I repeat it, to speak in this manner, is not only to have the same gross Conception of Space with your Farmers, but also to suppose the Points B and C, and all or most of the Points about them, to be really fixt, and in absolute Repose. But you shou'd not run with a multitude to commit Mistakes, no more than to do evil; and if I succeed in proving the natural, essential, intrinsic, and necessary Action of Matter, then you may easily perceive that these Objections will be no longer Difficultys, and that all your Circles of contiguous Balls, your Fish on the point of moving in the Water, and the rest of those three-bare Examples must be employ'd on some other occasions; because all these suppose

suppose an absolute Rest, as well as the Letter  
Generation of Motion, which is the V.  
thing in question; and cou'd it be  
prov'd, there wou'd be no solid an-  
swering of such Arguments for a *Va-*  
*cuum.*

II. I HINTED something to  
you before about the abuse of Words  
in Philosophy, and we may instance  
particularly certain Terms invented to  
very good purpose by Mathematicians;  
but misunderstood or perverted by  
others, and not seldom very wrongly  
apply'd by certain Mathematicians  
themselves, which can never fail to  
happen when abstracted Notions are  
taken for real Beings, and then laid  
down as Principles whereon to build  
Hypotheses. Thus the Mathematical  
Lines, Surfaces, and Points have bin  
maintain'd to exist in reality, and  
many Conclusions thence deduc'd, tho'  
very unhappily; as that Extension was  
compounded of Points, which is to  
say, that Length, Breadth, and Thick-  
ness are form'd of what is neither long,  
nor broad, nor thick, or Measure of  
no Quantity. So the word *Infi-*  
*nite* has bin wonderfully perplex'd;  
N 2 which

**Letter.** which has given occasion to a thousand  
**V.** Equivocations and Errors. Number  
 was made infinite ; as if it follow'd,  
 because Units may be added to one another without end, that there actually existed an infinite Number. Of this nature are infinite Time, the infinite Cogitation of Man, asymptotic Lines, and a great many other boundless Progressions, which are infinite only with respect to the Operations of our Minds, but not so in themselves : for whatever is really infinite, does actually exist as such ; whereas what only may be infinite, is very positively not so.

12. **BUT** no Word has bin more misapply'd, nor consequently has given occasion to more Disputes than Space, which is only an abstracted Notion (as you shall perceive hereafter.) or the Relation that any thing has to other Beings at a distance from it, without any Consideration of what lies between them; tho they have at the same time a real Existence. Thus Place is either the relative Position of a thing with respect to the circumambient Bodys, or the Room it fills with its own Bulk, and from which it is conceiv'd to exclude

clude all other Bodys, which are but mere Abstractions, the Capacity nothing differing from the Body contain'd: and so Distance is the Measure between any two Bodys, without regard to the things whose Extension is so measur'd. Yet because the Mathematicians had occasion to suppose Space without Matter, as they did Duration without Things, Points without Quantity, and the like; the Philosophers, who cou'd not otherwise account for the Generation of Motion in Matter which they held to be inactive, imagin'd a real Space distinct from Matter, which they held to be extended, incorporeal, immovable, homogeneous, indivisible, and infinite. But this whole Dispute depends on the Action and Infinity of Matter. In the first place, if Matter it self be essentially active, there's no need to help it to Motion by this Invention, nor is there any Generation of Motion. Secondly, if it be infinite, it can have no separate Parts that move independently of one another in crooked or streight Lines, notwithstanding those Modifications which we call particular divisible Bodys. Thirdly, Matter must be likewise

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Letter wise homogeneal, if it has Action of  
 V. it self as well as Solidity or Extension,  
 without being divided into Parts.  
 And fourthly, if it be infinite, the  
 Universe must be without all local  
 Motion, there being no fix'd Points  
 without it, to which it might be suc-  
 cessively apply'd, nor any place into  
 which it cou'd possibly remove.

13. PROCEEDING, SIR, ac-  
 cording to the Order of your Remarks,  
 I shall briefly endeavor to prove  
 these several Points. I am not insens-  
 ible that I oppose a Notion universally re-  
 ceiv'd, and that in this particular Arti-  
 cle of Space I am said to have the greatest  
 Man in the world against me, who yet  
 cannot grow any thing less, tho he shou'd  
 happen herein to be mistaken ; since  
 the Demonstrations and Discoverys of  
 his unparallel'd Book remain intirely  
 true without it. For my part, I can  
 no more believe an absolute Space  
 distinct from Matter, as the place of  
 it ; than that there is an absolute Time,  
 different from the things whose Du-  
 ration are consider'd. And yet Mr.  
 NEWTON is thought not only to be-  
 lieve these things, but also to put  
 them

them both on the same foot. *Times and Spaces*, says 'he, are as it were their own Places, and those of all other things. *All the things in the Universe are in Time as to the Order of Succession, and in Space as to the Order of Situation.* 'Tis essential to 'em that they be Places; and to think these primary Places can be mov'd, is absurd. These are therefore absolute Places, and the Translations from them are the only absolute Motions: I am convinc'd that these Words are capable of receiving an Interpretation favorable to my Opinion; but I chuse to cite them in the sense wherein they are commonly understood: besides that his Book (as I said before) is neither way concern'd.

14. AS for your alledging (to infer the Inactivity of Matter, as well as a *Vacuum*) that *one Body is heavier or lighter than another of equal Bulk*; you

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' Tempora & Spatia sunt sui-ipsorum & rerum omnium quasi loca. In Tempore, quoad ordinem Successionis, in Spatio, quoad ordinem Situs, locantur universa. De illorum essentia est ut sint loca, & loca primaria moveri absurdum est. Hæc sunt igitur absoluta loca, & solæ Translationes de his locis sunt absoluti Motus. P. 7.

Letter must suppose that Levity and Gravity  
 V. are not mere Relations, the Compar-  
 ~~~~~ sons of certain Situations and external Pressures ; but that they are real Beings, or absolute and inherent Qualitys, which is now by every body exploded, and contrary to all that you know your self of Mechanicks. It may not be difficult to persuade even Persons of a moderate Capacity, that there cou'd be no Levity or Gravity in the suppos'd Chaos, and that these Qualitys wholly depend on the Constitution and Fabrick of the Universe ; which is to say, that they are the Consequences of the World in actual Being, and the necessary Effects of its present Order, but not essential Attributes of Matter, the same Body becoming heavy or light by turns, according as it is plac'd among other Bodys, and there being nothing better known, than that many things are not sometimes in a state of Levity or Gravity. To imagine that any Parcel of Matter has Levity or Gravity of it self, because you see those Effects in the Fabrick of the World ; or to deduce it from the common Laws of Gravitation, is not only to imagine Matter  
 alike

alike affected in all Places, but that the **Letter**  
Wheels, and Springs, and Chains of a **V.**  
Warch, can perform all those Motions   
separately which they do together.  
And yet it was from such false Sup-  
positions, that the Philosophers, in their  
several Formations of the World, in-  
vented the Fable of the four Elements,  
orderly placing themselves according  
to their different degrees of Gravity  
and Levity ; the Earth undermost or  
in the Center, next to that the Water,  
then the Seat of the Air, and upper-  
most of all the Fire. All Sorts and  
Sects of People have bin superstitiously  
fond of this primary Chaos, a Notion  
as confus'd and monstrous as the Im-  
port of the Name, and built in every  
step on Suppositions that are not only  
arbitrary, but utterly false and chime-  
rical: such is the gross Conception  
of the Number and Unmixedness of  
the four Elements, drawn from the  
most compounded Bodys in the world ;  
such is the Levity and Gravity of the  
dancing Particles; and such the Sepa-  
ration of the Seeds of things (as they  
speak) which without such Levity  
and Gravity cou'd not be perform'd,  
nor indeed on these very Conditions,  
without

Letter without an Almighty Architect, which  
 V. they did not always take care to provide, or furnish'd him with such wretched Tools and Contrivance, as shew'd the Meanness of their own Understanding, the sole Model by which they form'd him. Such a precarious Supposition (in a word) is Matter's having bin at any time in this Confusion, without ascertaining how long or for what reason, with a thousand more the like Absurditys, which every man may easily represent to himself from these few Instances. This may also serve for an Example, how little stress is to be laid on universal Consent, or rather on any epidemical and common Error that makes pretences to that Name.

15. B U T not to ramble into Digressions, tho never so natural, you own that *most Bodys are in actual Motion, which can be no Argument that they have bin always so, or that there are not others in absolute Repose.* I grant that such a Consequence does not necessarily follow, tho the thing in it self be true. But however, it may not be amiss to consider, how far this  
 actual

actual Motion reaches and is allow'd, before we come to treat of Rest. Tho the Matter of the Universe be every where the same, yet, according to its various Modifications, it is conceiv'd to be divided into numberless particular Systems, Vortexes, or Whirlpools of Matter; and these again are subdivided into other Systems greater or less, which depend on one another, as every one on the Whole, in their Centers, Texture, Frame, and Coherence. Our Sun (for example) is the Center of one of those bigger Systems, which contains a great many lesser ones within the Sphere of its Activity, as all the Planets that move about it: and these are subdivided into yet lesser Systems that depend on them, as his Satellites wait upon Jupiter, and the Moon on the Earth; the Earth again is divided into the Atmosphere, Ground, Water, and other principal Parts; these again into Men, Birds, Beasts, Trees, Plants, Fishes, Worms, Insects, Stones, Metals, and a thousand other differences. Now as all these depend in a Link on one another, so their Matter (to speak in the usual Language) is mutually resolv'd into each other: for  
Earth,

Letter  
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Letter **V.** Earth, and Water, and Air, and Fire, are not only closely blended and united, but likewise interchangeably transform'd in a perpetual Revolution; Earth becoming Water, Water Air, Air Æther, and so back again in Mixtures without End or Number. The Animals we destroy contribute to preserve us, till we are destroy'd to preserve other things, and become Grass, or Plants, or Water, or Air, or something else that helps to make other Animals, and they one another, or other Men; and these again turn into Stone, or Wood, or Mettals, or Minerals, or Animals again, or become Parts of all these and of a great many other Things, Animals and Vegetables daily consuming and devouring each other; so true it is that every thing lives by the Destruction of another. All the Parts of the Universe are in this constant Motion of destroying and begetting, of begetting and destroying: and the greater Systems are acknowledg'd to have their ceaseless Movements as well as the smallest Particles, the very central Globes of the Vortexes turning about their own Axis; and every Particle in the Vortex gravitating towards the Center. Our Bodys, however we may flatter our selves,

selves, differ nothing from those of other Creatures, but like them receive Increase or Diminution by Nutrition and Evacuation, by Accretion, Transpiration, and several other ways, giving some Parts of ours to other Bodys, and receiving again of theirs, not altogether the same yesterday as to day, nor to continue the same to morrow, being alive in a perpetual Flux like a River, and in the total Dissolution of our System at death to become Parts of a thousand other things at once; our Carcases partly mixing with the Dust and Water of the Earth, partly exhal'd and evaporated into the Air, flying to so many different places, mixing and incorporating with innumerable things.

16. NO Parts of Matter are ty'd to any one Figure or Form, losing and changing their Figures and Forms continually, that is, being in perpetual Motion, clipt, or worn, or ground to pieces, or dissolv'd by other Parts, acquiring their Figures, and these theirs, and so on incessantly; Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, Iron, Wood, and Marble, Plants and Animals, being rarefy'd or condens'd,

**Letter** condens'd, or liquify'd, or congeal'd,  
**V.** or dissolv'd or coagulated, or any other  
 way resolv'd into one another. The  
 whole Face of the Earth exhibits those  
 Mutations every minute to our Eyes,  
 nothing continuing one hour numeri-  
 cally the same; and these Changes  
 being but several kinds of Motion, are  
 therefore the incontestable Effects of  
 some universal Action. But the Chan-  
 ges in the Parts make no Change in  
 the Universe: for it is manifest that  
 the continual Alterations, Successions,  
 Revolutions, and Transmutations of  
 Matter, cause no Accession or Dimi-  
 nution therein, no more than any Let-  
 ter is added or lost in the Alphabet by  
 the endless Combinations and Trans-  
 positions thereof into so many different  
 Words and Languages: for a thing  
 no sooner quits one Form than it puts  
 on another, leaving as it were the  
 Theater in a certain dress, and appear-  
 ing again in a new one, which pro-  
 duces a perpetual Youthfulness and Vi-  
 gor, without any Decay or Decrepitness  
 of the World, as some have foolishly  
 imagin'd, contrary not only to Reason,  
 but to Experience; the World, with  
 all the Parts and Kinds thereof, con-  
 tinuing

tinuing at all times in the same condition. The great Systems of the Universe being subdivided into gradual and lesser Systems of Matter, the Individuals of the latter do perish indeed, tho they are not annihilated, continuing only a certain time in their particular Forms, according to the Strength or Weakness of their Disposition, Structure, or Constitution, which we call the natural age or time of such a thing; yet if this Constitution, before its ordinary Period, be destroy'd by more prevalent circumambient Motions, in such cases we commonly call it Violence or Accident, as that a murder'd young man is dead before his time. But the Species still continues by Propagation, notwithstanding the Decay of the Individuals; and the Death of our Bodys, is but Matter going to be dress'd in some new Form: the Impressions may vary, but the Wax continues still the same, and indeed Death is in effect the very same thing with our Birth; for as to die is only to cease to be what we formerly were, so to be born is to begin to be something which we were not before. E'er I leave this Head, I beg

Better no particular Alteration or Division; and  
 the external local Motion or Changes  
 of Place, which are but the various Mod-  
 ifications of the essential Action as  
 their Subject; the particular Motions  
 being determin'd by other more pre-  
 valent Motions, to be direct or cir-  
 cular, fast or slow, continu'd, or inter-  
 rupted, according to the occurrent,  
 subsequent, or circumambient Motions  
 of other Bodies; no part of Matter  
 being without its own internal Energy,  
 however thus determin'd by the neigh-  
 boring Parts according as their parti-  
 cular Determination is stronger or  
 weaker, yields or resists; and these  
 again continue to be vary'd after some  
 other manner by the next; and so every  
 thing proceeds in endless Changes, that  
 is (as I maintain) in perpetual Motion.  
 Now all the local Motions imaginable  
 being acknowledg'd Accidents, increas-  
 ing, altering, diminishing, and perish-  
 ing, without the Destruction of the Subject  
 which they modify, or in which they  
 exist, this Subject cannot be wholly  
 imaginary, a mere abstracted Notion,  
 but something real and positive. Ex-  
 tension cannot be this Subject; since  
 the Idea of Extension does not neces-  
 sarily

farly infer any Variety, Alteration, or Letter Motion; and therefore (as I said, just now) it must be Action, since all those Motions are but the different Modifications of Action, as all particular Bodys or Quantitys are but the different Modifications of Extension. Of Solidity or Impenetrability I shall put you in mind in its due place, and show how these three essential Attributes, or Propertys are inseparable, and do co-operate.

18. B U T not to forget the Appeal to our Senses, wou'd not you believe with the Vulgar that the Stars are no bigger than ordinary Tapers, that the Sun and Moon are no more than a Foot or two in breadth, if your Reason had not computed the Distance between your Eyes and those Bodys, and measur'd their real Bulk by their Appearances in such a distance, with the other proper Arguments which I need not repeat to one that knows 'em so well? Is it not the same thing as to the distinguishing the fixt Stars from the Planets, and understanding the true Motion of the latter, which is very different from what the Senses exhibit? I will not descend so low as a

Letter freight Stick appearing crooked in the  
 V. Water, or the Colors on the Neck of  
 a Dove; nor soar so high as the Heat,  
 Cold, Relishes, and Odors, that are  
 not in the things themselves, which  
 we denominate from these Sensations.  
 But to come home to the Subject we  
 have in hand; is not local Motion it  
 self sometimes so slow, that it is not  
 perceiv'd by our Senses, no distinguish-  
 able Removal from one Point to ano-  
 ther, tho the Motion goes constantly  
 on all this while, and that we are  
 convinc'd of it at last by undoubted  
 Effects and visible Intervals, as in the  
 Hand of a Clock or the Shadow of a  
 Dial? And so it is in Motions that  
 are extremely swift, where no Succession  
 is distinctly observ'd, as in the Passage  
 of a Bullet, or the like. To judg of the  
 Body of a Man or any other Animal  
 by the external Surface, it wou'd seem  
 to have as little internal local Motion  
 (not to speak now of its inseparable  
 Action) as Lead, or Gold, or Stone; nor  
 wou'd we make a different Judgment  
 of any Tree or Plant. And yet un-  
 less every Particle of a Tree were in  
 motion, it cou'd neither receive Aug-  
 mentation when it grows, nor Dimi-  
 nution when it decays. Your Skill

in Anatomy, join'd to common Experience, will not let you question but that all the Particles of Animals are in perpetual Motion as well as those of Plants, growing, decaying, transpiring, dissolving, corrupting, becoming fat or lean, hot or cold, tho the Man sits still, or the Beast is asleep, or the Tree stands fixt in its place. The Circulation of the Blood and Sap to every imaginable Part, are now no Secrets in Natural Philosophy. Nor is Iron, Stone, Gold, or Lead, more void of this internal Motion, than those they call fluid Bodys : for otherwise they cou'd never undergo those Alterations which Air, or Fire, or Water, or any thing else produces in them. But tho by their being reduc'd into these Forms from a precedent different State, tho by their continual wearing, and final Change of Figure, 'tis certain that their Parts are always in motion, yet they are not so easily nor quickly determin'd by other circumambient Motions (tho there are that do it very suddenly) to change their Form or Situation perceptibly to our Senses; which made People imagine that they had no Motion at all, nor any peculiar Determinations.

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19. **NEVERTHELESS** the very remaining of such Bodys in one place is a real Action, the Efforts and Resistance of this Parcel being equal for some time to the determining Motions of the neighboring Bodys that act upon it, and that will not suffer it to pass certain Bounds; which is easily understood from what I have already no less copiously than plainly said of the numberless successive Determinations of Motion, of which this is one kind, and call'd by the People Rest, to distinguish that State of Body from the local Motions that are visible. A Body that descends by Gravity or the stronger Impulse of other Bodys, as its own Impulse is stronger than the Determinations that yield to it on the way, is no less in Action that it is resisted from advancing further by the yet stronger Resistance of the Earth, and hinder'd from going back by an equal Pressure from the Bodys behind it, than a Ship is without Action, if the Force of the Wind blowing towards the mouth of the River, be equal to that of the Tide flowing towards the Spring of it: for let either

of these get the better of the other, Letter  
 and the Ship sails. But all this while .V.  
 the Ship was depriv'd only of one sort of   
 Motion, and not of all Effort or Action,  
 no more than Iron, or Lead, or Gold,  
 whose Parts, by their own internal  
 Motion, and by the Motions of the  
 circumambient Bodys, are perpetually  
 growing and increasing, or wearing,  
 molding, decaying, changing, and pe-  
 rishing in some other manner to us  
 imperceptible; till by the Rust or  
 Tarnish on their Surface, by the Aug-  
 mentation or Diminution of their  
 Quantity, the Alteration of their Form  
 or Figure, or by some other sensible  
 Effects, we are intirely convinc'd of  
 it at last. Since Rest therefore is but  
 a certain Determination of the Motion  
 of Bodys, a real Action of Resis-  
 tance between equal Motions, 'tis plain  
 that this is no absolute Inactivity among  
 Bodys, but only a relative Repose with  
 respect to other Bodys that sensibly  
 change their place.

20. BUT the Vulgar taking local  
 Motion (as they do all other Rela-  
 tions) for a real Being, have thought  
 Rest a Privation, or that Motion was

Letter Action, and that Rest was a Passion ;  
 V.  whereas every Motion is as well a Passion  
 in respect of the Body that gave it the  
 last Determination, as it is an Action  
 compar'd to the Body that it deter-  
 mines next. But the turning of these  
 and such Words from a relative to  
 an absolute Signification, has occa-  
 sion'd most of the Errors and Disputes  
 on this Subject. However the best Phi-  
 losophers and Mathematicians, notwith-  
 standing their making Motion extrane-  
 ous and Rest essential to Matter, have  
 fairly acknowledg'd the actual constant  
 Motion of every Part ; being oblig'd to  
 this by the irresistible Evidence of Rea-  
 son and Experience. They grant that  
 the same incessant Changes and Motions  
 appear in the Bodys under ground, as  
 in those above it ; which is confirm'd  
 not only by the nature of the several  
 Beds of Earth in Mines and Quarrys,  
 by the generation of Metals and Mi-  
 nerals, but also by the Appearances of  
 all other subterranean Bodys and Fos-  
 sils. They own that all the Pheno-  
 mena of Nature must be explain'd by  
 Motion, by the Action of all things on  
 one another, according to mechanick  
 Principles. And 'tis so in effect that  
 they

they account for all the Diversities in Nature, for the elementary and sensible Qualities; for all the Forms, Figures, Mixtures, or other Modifications and Alterations of Matter. Those who think the most truly and nicely therefore on local Motion, consider the Points from which and to which the Body moves, not as in absolute Repose, but only as quiescent with respect to the Motion of that Body: and tho Mr. NEWTON be deem'd an Advocate for extended incorporeal Space, yet he declares that perhaps no one Body is in absolute Rest, that perhaps no immovable bodily Center is to be found in Nature; and in one place he expresses himself in these Words: *The Vulgar attribute Resistance to quiescent, and Impulse to moving Bodys; but Motion and Rest, as commonly conceiv'd, are only respectively*

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\* Fieri enim potest ut nullum se vera quiescat Corpus, ad quod loca motusque referantur. Pag. 7.

\* Hactenus exposui motus Corporum attractorum ad Centrum immobile, quale tamen vix extat in rerum Natura. Pag. 162.

\* Vulgus Resistentiam quiescentibus & Impetum moventibus tribuit; sed Motus & Quies, uti vulgo concipi-

Letter *tively distinguish'd from one another, nor*  
 *are those things always in true Repose,*  
*which are vulgarly consider'd as quiescent:*  
 Thus far that deservedly admir'd Au-  
 thor, who has seen the farthest of all  
 Men living into the actual State of  
 Matter; and indeed all Physicks ought  
 to be denominat'd from the Title he  
 has given to the first Book of his Prin-  
 ciples, viz. *of the Motion of Bodys.*

21. I NEED not ask your par-  
 don, SIR, for being so particular,  
 both because it was your request to  
 me, and for the sake of those who  
 are ignorant of many things which I  
 might suppose to you, and to whom  
 you might nevertheless show my Let-  
 ter, or I speak of my Opinion. I think  
 after all that has bin said, I may now  
 venture to conclude that *Action is essen-*  
*tial to Matter,* since it must be the  
 real Subject of all those Modifications  
 which are call'd local Motions, Chan-  
 ges, Differences, or Diversities; and

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concipiuntur, respectu solo distinguuntur ab invicem,  
 neque semper vere quiescent quæ vulgo tanquam qui-  
 escentia spectantur. Pag. 2.

princi-

principally because absolute Repose; on which the Inactivity or Lumpishness of Matter was built, is entirely destroy'd, and prov'd no where to exist. This vulgar Error of absolute Rest was occasion'd by the Appearances of heavy, hard, and bulky Bodys; and seeing they did not change that strong Determination (which the People did not conceive to be an Action) but by much stronger Determinations, whose Effects were obvious to their Senses, they concluded first that there was an absolute Rest, and secondly that all Bodys wou'd continue in that State without some foreign Mover, which they imagin'd not to be Matter, since all Bodys were Matter, and that what was natural to the Parts, was so to the Whole. At least, the Philosophers made such Inferences from the Notion of Rest, which they learnt from their Education, and from the sole Judgment of their Senses: for none is born a Divine, Philosopher, or Politician, and therefore every man at the beginning stands on the same ground with the Vulgar, receiving the same Prejudices and Impressions; and however he may extricate himself from many Errors, yet if he leaves any in possession

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Letter possession unexamined, he shall always  
 V. reason himself into Contradictions or  
 ~~~~~ Absurdities from that Principle, tho  
 otherwise justly reckon'd a wise and  
 able Person. Since therefore there is no  
 such absolute Rest in those Examples  
 you have brought, and that on the con-  
 trary every other Parcel of Matter, as  
 well as these, are in absolute Motion,  
 you shou'd not side with such Philo-  
 sophers, as were either the most super-  
 stitious or the least perspicacious; nor  
 ought you to argue at all from a vulgar  
 Error: but seeing that every Part of  
 Matter is prov'd to be always in mo-  
 tion, you shou'd conclude that Motion  
 is essential to the Whole, for the same  
 reason that you think Extension to be  
 so; because every Part is extended.  
 To all that will think without Biass,  
 Experience renders these Cases parallel,  
 and Reason evidently demonstrates it.

22. I HAVE industriously omitted  
 to speak any thing of the relative Mo-  
 tions of all those Bodys conceiv'd to be  
 in Repose; and I shall but hint them  
 now, to put you in mind that at the  
 same time they cease not to be absolute.  
 Every thing in the Globe of our Earth  
 (which

(which is as true of all the other Planets) partakes of its constant Motion; for the Motion of the Whole is but the Sum total of the Motion of the Parts; which is not only plain from the Reason of the thing it self, but also from the proportionable Force that is necessary either to impress a new Determination on any Body, or to stop the Determination it has already acquir'd, for the one cannot be less than the other. Tho all the assignable Parts of a Ball in Motion are at rest with respect to one another, or to their places in the Ball; yet none will say, but that they are all in actual Motion as Parts of the Ball, and in relation to every thing without it. So a Passenger shares the Motion of a Ship under Sail, to say nothing of the specific Motions of his human System; tho he's conceiv'd to be at rest, with regard to the place wherein he sits, or to the other Parts of the Ship, which, notwithstanding the Motion of the Whole, keep the same Distance and Position with respect to him. I have likewise dropt but a word (in the fifteenth Paragraph) of the Centripetal Force, by which all the Bodys of the Earth are drawn or  
tend

Letter  
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~~~~~

Letter tend towards its Center (as all others  
 V. to the proper Centers of their Motions)  
 ~~~~~ nor have I mention'd a syllable of the  
 centrifugal Force; by which they en-  
 deavour to recede from the Center in a  
 straight Line, if they are not otherwise  
 determin'd by some stronger Cause; as a  
 Stone whirl'd about in a Sling is detain'd  
 in its Orbit by the Leather, the String  
 of which, being stretch'd by the Motion  
 of the Stone, is contracted towards the  
 Stone it self, by its Efforts to fly off  
 directly in every point of the Circle  
 it describes; and at the same time it is  
 equally contracted towards the man's  
 Hand; whence it follows, that the  
 Center approaches as much to the Stone  
 as the Stone does to the Center; which  
 yet does not always happen for many  
 reasons. Notable Effects depend on  
 these Forces the nearer they are to being  
 equal, or the stronger one of 'em is  
 than the other; wherefore the centri-  
 petal being much greater than the centri-  
 fugal Force of the Parts of the Earth,  
 taking in likewise the Atmosphere, is  
 one main reason that it never loses any  
 of its Matter, and that it always con-  
 tinues of the same Bulk or Dimensions,  
 the centripetal Force of Gravity that de-  
 tains

tains the several Bodys in their Orbit, being considerably stronger than the centrifugal Force of Motion, by which they strive to fly off in the Tangent. Let the Causes of these Forces be what they will; they are unanswerable Arguments to my purpose of a perpetual Motion in all things. But I shall write no more concerning them, lest I insensibly engage my self in a Dispute with you about the nature of Gravity, as whether the weight of Bodys be always proportionable to their Quantity of Matter; that is, whether there be more Matter as there is more weight in a cubic Foot of Lead than in a cubic Foot of Cork, which, I know, you maintain after no contemptible Philosophers: or whether the same Quantity of Matter be contain'd in the same Dimensions of Mercury, Gold, Silver, Iron, Lead, Barre, Water, Cork, or Air, tho their specific Gravities be so different from each other, proceeding partly from external Pressures, and partly from those internal Structures or Modifications which give their common Matter those various Forms that constitute their Species, and are distinguish'd by their Gravity, as they are by their Figures, Colors,

Letter

W.



**Letter V.** Motion was some Being intimately join'd to Matter however modify'd, and that it was inseparable from the same. But this pretended Animation is utterly useless, since Matter has Motion of it self, and that there is no real Repose. These enlivening Philosophers were divided into several Classes; so many Expedients are necessary to put some face of Truth upon Error! Some of 'em, as the Stoicks, held this Life to be a Soul of the World, co-extended with Matter, insinuated and infus'd thro the whole and every part thereof, being it self essentially corporeal, tho infinitely finer than all other Bodys, which, in respect of its Subtilty and Action, were reputed extremely gross: but the universal Soul of the Platonists was immaterial; and a pure Spirit. Others, as STRATO of Lampascus, and the modern Hylozoicks, taught that the Particles of Matter had Life, and also a degree of Thought, or a direct Perception without any Reflection; to which HERACLITUS of old, and lately SPINOSA, added Understanding or reflex Acts, without ever removing the Difficultys apparently offering themselves against such a precarious Hypothesis,

sis, not as much as showing (tho this Consciousness were granted), how the several reasoning Particles cou'd agree together to form the same Body or System, or to separate or join so regularly on certain occasions, without any jarring or change of Opinions, as to their being better or worse in other places, single or in numerous Company; nor how, tho all the Particles of a Man have Sense and Understanding, he finds but one such Faculty in himself, and that Faculty exerting its Operations only in one place. No less romantic is the plastic Life of other Philosophers, which (according to its modern Reviver, the universally learned Dr. CUDWORTH) is not material, but an inferior sort of Spirit without Sensation or Thought, yet endu'd with a vital Operation and Energy; these Plastics seeming to differ with the Hylozoics only about words, tho pretending a mighty Disagreement, to keep clear, I suppose, of the absurd or invidious Consequences charg'd on their Opinions; as the Jansenists and Calvinists treat one another about Predestination, in which Doctrin they certainly mean the same thing, notwithstanding the nice distinctions of the

Letter Jansenists. But all these Hypotheses  
 V. are so many visible Shifts to account  
 for the actual Motion of inactive Matter,  
 and to avoid bringing God every  
 moment on the stage, and setting him  
 a work on all occasions, nay in all Actions  
 without distinction, and this too by  
 an absolute and unavoidable Necessity.  
 Thus far of such as provided external  
 or foreign Movers of Matter; and as  
 for those who allow'd it naturally inactive,  
 but assign'd no Cause for its  
 Motion, as ANAXIMANDER, ANAXIMENES,  
 and some other Antients; nor any Cause  
 either of its Motion or Cogitation, as  
 SPINOSA among the Moderns: these, I say,  
 are so unphilosophical as to deserve no  
 further History, and have always afforded  
 matter of Triumph to the Stoics, Spiritualists,  
 and Plastics, or reckon 'em by  
 what other Names or Distributions you  
 may think more proper.

24. BUT the most universal Mistake  
 proceeding from the suppos'd Inactivity  
 of Matter is the Notion of an infinite,  
 extended, and yet incorporeal Space.  
 Because great matters are built on this  
 substantial Space, and that men  
 of

of great Name and Merit have countenanc'd it by their Approbation, I shall give you the History of this Opinion, as I have done of the rest; tho I might justly neglect it after having prov'd Matter to be essentially active, and that its general Motion was the immediate Subject of all the particular motive Determinations, as Extension is the immediate Subject of the several Figures and Quantities: for it was likewise to help suggest Matter to Motion, that this Space (as the room of its Action) was principally devis'd; but Matter not being inactive, nor wanting to have Motion continually impress'd by an external Agent, Space may be exterminated from Philosophy, as useless and imaginary. Extension is granted on all hands to be infinite, for it cannot be terminated by Inextension; and the Demonstrations for this are so universally known and acknowledg'd, that I shall not trouble you with repeating them. No less infinite is Matter, when conceiv'd as an extended thing, for you can imagin no bounds of it, to which you may not add more Extension infinitely; and therefore if it be not actually infinite, its Finiteness must proceed

Letter  
V.  
~~~~~

Letter from some other Cause besides its Extension.  
 V. Those who maintain'd Matter to be finite upon philosophical grounds, imagin'd it to be inactive, divisible into Parts independent and separate, with vacant Interstices; which Parts were heavy or light of themselves, and had various Figures, as well as degrees of Motion, when violently forc'd out of their natural state of Rest. This necessarily led 'em to suppose finite Extensions, at the same time that they allow'd another Extension, which was infinite. And then they cou'd not but make those Extensions essentially different in other respects; the one immovable, impenetrable, indivisible, unchangeable, homogeneous, incorporeal, and all-containing; the other movable, penetrable, divisible, changeable, heterogeneous, corporeal, and contain'd; the one betokening infinite Space, and the other particular Bodys. But this whole Distinction is built on supposing the thing in question, and by the equivocal Signification of the words Place, Whole, Parts, Particles, Divisibility, or the like; and therefore after they took it for granted that Matter was finite, divided into Parts, that it wanted Motion from elsewhere,  
 and

and had a void Place wherein to act, then they establish'd this Wheel within a Wheel, or one Extension penetrating another, as if Modes were penetrated by their Subject. But all these Suppositions being (as I have often told you) only the Consequences of the main Supposition, that Matter was inactive, and the contrary of this or the essential Motion of it being already demonstrated, there is no reason not to think Matter infinite, and that, as Nothing has no Propertys, so that the acknowledg'd infinite Extension belongs to this infinite Subject, which is infinitely modify'd in its Motion, Extension, and other inseparable Attributes.

Letter  
V.  


25. I MIGHT conclude here, SIR; but to put this matter beyond all doubt with you, I shall be at a little more pains to show how all these things, which they attribute to Space and Body as their essential Differences, do wholly belong without any contradiction to infinite Matter: for I grant that these Propertys have a real Existence, and tho seemingly opposite, they are but the Affections of the same Subject under various Considerations.

Letter V. When Bodys are conceiv'd finite, moveable, divisible, at rest, heavy or light, under different Figures, and in various Situations; then we abstract the Modifications from the Subject, or, if you will, the Parts from the Whole, and imagine proper Boundaries to certain Portions of Matter, which separate and distinguish them from all the rest, whence came originally the Notion of a Void: but when we consider infinite Space as impenetrable, immovable, indivisible, the place which receives all Bodys, wherein they move and are contain'd, it self being void of all Change, Form, or Figure; then, on the contrary, we abstract the infinite Subject from the finite Modifications, or the Whole from the Parts. Now let's apply this Doctrin in particular Instances. Since nothing can be added to Infinite nor taken away from it, the Universe can neither increase nor diminish, there being no place without it to which you may remove what you divide from it, or from which you may bring what you add to it: consequently it is immovable and indivisible; and also without all Figure, since it has no Bounds or Limits; and

and immense, since no finite Quantity, tho never so often repeated, can equal or measure its Extension. Therefore when we say, that Space is all-containing, we mean it of infinite Matter, to distinguish the Whole from the Parts, which yet are not different from the Whole. When we say it permeates all things, we abstract the Extension of Matter, from its other Properties; and so we do, when we say it's incorporeal, and then considering it otherwise than as the Mathematicians in Points, or Lines, or Surfaces. When we affirm it is one, we mean that it is infinite and indivisible; for there's but one Universe, tho there may be numberless Worlds. When we say it is the Place of all things, we signify that it is the Subject of its own Modifications; whether Motions, Figures, or others. When we say it's homogeneous, we mean that Matter is ever the same, be the Modifications of it never so various. And lastly, when we say that finite Bodys cannot exist without an infinite Space, we only say that they cannot be unless they are; for their own Solidity or their Respect to other things is all their Place, abstracting from

Letter from the Universe of which they are Parts,  
 V. of whose infinite Motion, Solidity, and  
 ~~~~~ Extension, they finitely partake : for  
 infinite Matter is the real Space and Place,  
 as well as the real Subject of its own particular Portions and Modifications.

26. Y O U may now perceive how this Notion of absolute Space was form'd, partly by gratuitous Suppositions, as that Matter was finite, inactive, and divisible; partly, by abstracting Extension, the most obvious Property of Matter, without considering the other Property, or their absolute Connection in the same Subject, tho each of 'em may be mentally abstracted from the rest, which is of singular use to Mathematicians on several occasions: provided such Abstractions be never taken for Realitys, and made to exist out of the Subjects from which they are abstracted, no more than plac'd in another Subject uncertain or unknown. Matter is often abstracted from Motion, as Motion is from Matter, so are Solidity and Matter, Motion and Extension, Extension and Solidity, Solidity and Motion; each of these may be and is taken by it self without  
 any

any Consideration of the rest, whereas *Letter*  
in reality the Motion of Matter de- V/  
pends on its Solidity and Extension, ~~~~~  
and so all of 'em inseparably on one  
another. But the Defenders of Space,  
after abstracting Extension from Mat-  
ter, then distinguish'd between Exten-  
sion in general and the particular Ex-  
tension of Matter, of this or that Body, as  
if the latter were something superadded to  
the former, tho' they cou'd not assign the  
Subject of the former, whether a Substance  
neither Body nor Spirit, or a new kind  
of Nothing endow'd with the Property's  
of a Being. Nay many of them have  
not stuck to make it pass for the Su-  
preme Being it self, or at least for an  
inadequate Conception of God, as may  
be seen in the ingenious Mr. RALPH-  
SON'S Book of Real Space, to whom  
I had an eye in the two foregoing  
Paragraphs ; tho, as may be likewise  
learnt from his own Authority's, he was  
neither the first Broacher of this Con-  
ceit, nor the only Maintainer of it  
now. I am satisfy'd that most of those  
Gentlemen did firmly believe the Ex-  
istence of a Deity, and I charitably  
hope it of 'em all ; but in my Opinion  
their unwary Zeal refin'd him into  
mere

Letter mere Nothing, or (what they wou'd  
 V. as little allow) they made Nature or  
 the Universe to be the only God: but  
 the Goodness of their Intention ought  
 to secure 'em with all men of Candor  
 from the Charge and Consequences of  
 Atheism. Their Mistake however was  
 perceiv'd by the Atheists themselves,  
 and made the Subject of their Mirth,  
 as in these four Lines of a Poem,  
 wherein, after cavilling before at some  
 other Notions of the Deity, they ridi-  
 cule this infinite incorporeal Space on  
 much better grounds.

*Others, whose Heads sublimer Notions  
 trace,*

*Cunningly prove that thou'rt Almighty  
 Space;*

*And Space w'are sure is nothing, ergo  
 Thou:*

*These Men slip into Truth they know  
 not how.*

And truly the fancy of one Extension  
 penetrating another, made many others  
 laugh, who are as far as any from A-  
 theism or Irreligion: and some of 'em  
 wou'd fain learn where the Reason  
 and Wisdom of extended Space resides;  
 whether

whether in the Whole, or in any of the Parts, I speak of Parts in a sense of Accommodation, for Infinite can have none: but if with one of C I C E R O's Dialogists they wou'd infer that the Whole must have Understanding, because some Portions of it are intelligent; besides not allowing the Understanding of the Parts to belong in any manner to their Extension, we may retort with the other Speaker in C I C E R O, that by the same Argument, the Whole must be a Courtier, a Musician, a Dancing-master, or a Philosopher, because many of the Parts are such. But these are Sophisms on both sides, by confounding variable Modes with essential Propertys, or by ascribing true Effects to imaginary, foreign, or disproportionable Causes.

27. A F T E R accounting for the essential Motion of Matter, you'll find that the Comparisons and Similitudes rather than the Arguments of those who defend Space, prove no more than that you conceive what they mean, or else that they generally beg the Question. I can suppose, with any of them, that all the Matter of the World is reduc'd  
by

**Letter** by God into two equal Spheres; that if they be at a distance from one another, there is between them a measurable Space or Void; or that if they mutually touch in a Point (as perfect Spheres must necessarily do) there is a Space which is not Body, between the other Points of their Circumferences. But is not all this at the same time to suppose Matter finite, to suppose this very Space which they pretend to prove, and from no reason that I can see, but from the bare Consideration of Gravity? I can with Mr. LOCK conceive the Motion of one Body alone without any other succeeding immediately into its place; but it is by abstracting this single Body, and withholding my Attention from those that really succeed it. I can with him conceive two Bodys at a distance approaching one another, without displacing any thing else till their Surfaces come to meet; but 'tis by abstracting from all that they necessarily displace: for, as he judiciously observes himself, it does not follow that any thing exists in such a state, merely because we can conceive it so; or there wou'd be great store of Hydras, Centaurs,

turs, Chimeras, and other Monsters, which never had a Being. But I grant to him that by such Instances I perfectly understand the meaning of those who contend for Space or a Void, which was absurd in the Cartesians to deny, and unpardonable to dispute against a thing, whereof they profess to have no Idea. Mr. LOCK has all that can be said on this Subject in his *Essay of Human Understanding*, especially in the thirteenth Chapter of the second Book, where among other things he uses these words: *If Body be not suppos'd infinite, which, I think, no one will affirm, I can conceive a Man at the extremity of Matter, and that he can stretch his Hand beyond his Body.* He cou'd not be ignorant how many affirm'd the Infinity of Matter before he was born, and I am not the only Man that does it in his own time: but tho I can abstract to my self such imaginary Bounds, yet I cannot meet with one good reason to persuade me that Extension (which he acknowledges infinite) does exist any where out of Matter: I say, that I find nothing offer'd to persuade me of this, but such Suppositions as I have already confuted;

Letter

V.



confuted; not to insist on insurmountable Difficultys arising from those fictitious Extremitys, as to their Consistence, Figure, whether any thing can break loose from them, what becomes of such Fractions, and a thousand other Riddles. I can further gratify him in the Consideration of divided Particles; but I deny that the Continuity of infinite Matter can ever be separated by any distinct Surfaces with void intermediate Spaces: for we only abstract (as I told you in the sixth and seventh Paragraphs) what we call Parts, considering by it self so much of Extension as is for our purpose, and distinguishing such Parcels not by real Divisions from the Whole, but by the Modifications of Color, Figure, Motion, or the like, as we consider the Heat without the Light of the Sun. He says further, *That those who assert the Impossibility of Space existing without Matter, must not only make Body infinite, but must also deny a power in God to annihilate any part of Matter.* That they make Matter infinite is confest; but what he adds about Annihilation is deny'd: for besides that no Revelation from God can be produc'd, wherein he  
has

has declar'd that he will annihilate any part of Matter, so it is no Argument for a real Space, that God has it in his power to annihilate, no more than that the World shall actually finish in three Days, because I conceive it possible for God to destroy it in that short time. I know no reason (of what he asserts in the same place) why the Maintainers of infinite Matter shou'd *be loth to speak out their opinion*, any more than the Maintainers of infinite Space, or of any other Infinite, for the word is apply'd to more Subjects than one or two: and what made CARTESIUS backward to affirm expressly that Matter was infinite, contenting himself with the word Indefinite, was his being sure on the one hand that Extension was infinite; and yet; allowing withal that Matter was naturally inactive and really divisible, he cou'd not well demonstrate its Infinity, tho you that read him so often need no Proofs that he sometimes positively affirm'd it. As for the Theological Exceptions to this Position, they are of little weight, and show the Philosophy of some Men to be as little as their Zeal is great and fervent; nor do I believe that the moderate and

Letter

V.



Q

learned

Letter V. learned Divines of our time will revive the exploded Sophisms of their ignorant Predecessors. But I desire you wou'd remember, that notwithstanding my Dissent with Mr. LOCK about Space, I consider his *Essay of Human Understanding* to be the most useful Book towards attaining universal Knowledg, that is extant in any Language; as well as for helping Men to speak pertinently, intelligibly, and accurately, of all kinds of Subjects: nor have I affected here to oppose so great a Man; but knowing how much his Authority sway'd with you from my own Recommendation, I took care to remove the Prejudices you might thence entertain against infinite Matter, its essential Motion, or whatever might be built on such Foundations.

28. AND now, SIR, after having led me this tedious Chase, by the work you took care to cut out for me in your short but most comprehensive Letter, I question not but you'll allow that Motion ought to enter into the Definition of Matter, no less than Extension or Solidity. But if you demand the Definition of Motion it self, I answer that I cannot give it, nor any other Man,  
tho

tho never so able; not that we know it the less for all this, but on the contrary because we know it better than any thing which is capable of a Definition. Simple Ideas, such as Motion, Extension, Color, Sound, are self-evident, and their Names by no means definable; but the single Words which denote complex Ideas, that is, a Collection of self-evident Ideas consider'd as one thing, are the true Objects of Definition; because the several Terms for those Ideas, when put together, show the Connection, Possibility, and Conception of the Whole. Thus all the Words in the world cou'd not explain Blue, nor give the clear Idea of it to one who never saw that Color; but supposing the same Person never saw any Gold, tho well acquainted with other Metals, yet he'll be able to form a distinct Notion of it, from the mouth of another who describes it of a certain Yellowness and Weight, malleable, fusible, fixt, and the like. When the Names therefore of simple Ideas are defin'd, we must not imagine it to be their Subjects; for synonymous Terms do not explain the nature of the thing, but give us the meaning of the Word in more intelligible

Letter Terms: wherefore Passage, Translation,  
 V. Removing, successive Application, are  
 ~~~~~ but other words for Motion, and no  
 Definitions of the thing, no more than  
 ARISTOTLE'S *Act of a being in power*  
*so far forth as it is in power*; but all  
 particular local Motions may be defin'd  
 by the Lines they describe, and the  
 Causes that determine the Course or  
 Degrees of their Motion. The same is  
 to be understood of the general Extensi-  
 on of Matter, and of its particular Deter-  
 minations, by Measure, Figures, or any  
 other way. The Solidity of all Mat-  
 ter is likewise an intuitive or undefinable  
 Idea. But I do not here understand So-  
 lidity in the sense of Geometers, of eve-  
 ry assign'd Quantity that has three Di-  
 mensions; but as Mr. LOCK has sub-  
 stituted this positive Term, instead of  
 the negative one of Impenetrability,  
 for the Resistance we find in every Body  
 to the Entrance of any other Body into  
 the place it possesses till it has left it: as  
 a drop of Water equally prest on all sides,  
 is an insurmountable Obstacle for the  
 strongest Bodys in the Universe to join,  
 till it be remov'd; and so a piece of  
 Wood will keep your two Hands from  
 ever coming together, tho you endea-  
 your

vour it never so forcibly. The same is as true of all fluid and soft things, as of the most fixt or hard, or heavy or light; as true of Air and Pulp, as of Gold and Diamonds; which, as the most exact Mr. LOCK again observes to you, distinguishes the word as put for an inseparable Property of Matter, from the common Acceptation of it, when solid is put for hard, in which sense it is a certain Cohesion of the Parts of any thing difficultly separated, whereas in the Philosophical sense it is a Repletion, or utter Exclusion of all other Bodys, and so I have understood it throughout this whole Letter, except in the third Paragraph.

Letter  
V.

29. I WON'T say that Matter has no other essential Propertys but these three of Extension, Solidity, and Action: but I am persuaded that from the due and joint Consideration of these alone, a world of its Phænomena may be better accounted for than hitherto. But few Discoverys are to be expected in natural Philosophy from one who abstracts any of them from the rest, or that makes it alone the compleat Essence of Matter: for 'tis most certain that in

Letter V. **Matter those Attributes are never other-wise but mentally divided from one another.** That Extension, for example, exhausts the Idea of Matter, I deny; since it does not imply Solidity or Motion: but that all extended is Matter, may be very true, tho Matter be not barely extended, but likewise active and solid. But tho in the pure Consideration of those Ideas the one does not suppose the other, and that each of 'em has certain Modes which are conceiv'd to belong immediately to it self, yet they are so firmly linkt in Nature, that the one cannot exist without the other, and they all necessarily concur to the producing of those Modes which are proper to each. Extension is the immediate Subject of all the Divisions, Figures, and Parcels of Matter; but 'tis Action that causes those Alterations, and they cou'd not be distinct without Solidity. Action is the immediate Cause of all local Motions, Changes, or Varietys in Matter; but Extension is the Subject and Measure of their Distances: and tho upon Solidity depends the Resistance, Impulse, and Protrusion of Bodys, yet 'tis Action that produces them in Extension. Solidity, Extension, and Action, are therefore  
three

three distinct Ideas, but not three different things; only the various Considerations of one and the self-same Matter. To return to our particular Subject, you may easily perceive by this time, that the *Vis motrix*, the true motive Force is this essential Action of Matter; and that the *Vis impressa*, the impressed Force of particular Bodys, is some Determination of the general Action: for in this sense it's indisputable that nothing can move, that is, determine it self, till it be determin'd by some other thing: so that Matter being active, the Direction given to that Action in any part, wou'd of it self for ever continue, because no Effect can be without a Cause, and by consequence this Direction must be chang'd by some greater Force, as that by another, and so on, one never ending but for another to begin, no more than any Figure is destroy'd in Matter, but to make place for another. Thus one Motion is always succeeded by another Motion, and never by absolute Rest, no more than in any Parcel of Matter the ceasing of one Figure is the ceasing of all, which is impossible. These Determinations of Motion in the Parts of solid extended Matter, are what we call the Phæno-

Letter mena of Nature, and to which we give

V. Names or ascribe Uses, Perfection or  
 Imperfection, according as they affect

our Senses, and cause Pain or Pleasure to our Bodys, contribute to our Preservation or Destruction: but we do not always denominate 'em from their real Causes, or ways of producing one another, as the Elasticity, Hardness, Softness, Fluidity, Quantity, Figures, and Relations of particular Bodys. On the contrary we frequently attribute many Determinations of Motion to no Cause at all, as the spontaneous Motion of Animals: for, however those Motions may be accompany'd by Thought, yet, consider'd as Motions, they have their physical Causes, as a Dog's running after a Hare, the Bulk of the external Object acting by its whole Force of Impulse or Attraction on the Nerves, which are so dispos'd with the Muscles, Joints, and other Parts, as to produce various Motions in the Animal Machine. And whoever understands in any measure the Action of Bodys on one another by their immediate Contact, or by the imperceptible Particles that continually flow from them, and to this Knowledg joins that of Mechanics, Hydrostatics, and  
 Anatomy,

Anatomy, will be convinc'd that all the Motions of sitting, standing, lying, rising, running, walking, and such others, have their proper, external, material, and proportionable Determinations. After Mr. NEWTON, in the Preface of his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, has spoken of Gravity, Elasticity, Resistance, Impulse, and Attraction, and of his Explication of the mundane System by these Principles; \* *I wish*, adds he, *that we cou'd by the same Method of reasoning be able to explain the other Phenomena of Nature from mechanic Principles! for I am induc'd by divers Considerations to suspect a little, that all these may depend on certain Forces, whereby from Causes yet undiscover'd the Particles of Bodys are mutually impell'd against each other, and cohere according to regular Figures, or whereby they recede and are driven from one another: which*

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\* Utinam cetera Naturæ Phænomena ex Principiis mechanicis eodem argumentandi genere derivare liceret! Nam multa me movent, ut nonnihil suspicer ea omnia ex viribus quibusdam pendere posse, quibus Corporum particulae per causas nondum cognitæ vel in se mutuo impelluntur & secundum Figuras regulares coherent, vel ab invicem fugantur & recedunt: quibus viribus ignotis, Philosophi hæcenus Naturam frustra cecurunt.

Letter *Forces being yet unknown, the Philosophers  
V. have hitherto attempted Nature in vain.*

What those particular Forces and Figures may be, with their Reasons and Degrees, none in the world is so well able to discover and reduce into an intelligible System, as the most excellent Author: but as for the general or moving Force of all Matter, I wou'd flatter my self, that I have done something towards it in this Letter.

30. THUS I have return'd a particular Answer, I think, to every Demand in yours, except to your last Objection, which (were there degrees in Truth and Falshood) is more feeble than all the rest, That *after admitting the Activity of Matter, there seems to be no need of a presiding Intelligence*: which, give me leave to say it, is the most thoughtless and unweigh'd Expression I ever knew to drop from your Mouth or Pen; since you do not allow your self to draw invidious Consequences contrary to the Persuasion of your own Conscience, as but too many are known to do. Besides, that God was able to create this Matter active as well as extended, that he cou'd give it the  
one

one Property as well as the other, and **Letter**  
 that no reason can be assign'd why he **V.**  
 shou'd not endue it with the former   
 as well as with the latter ; is there  
 likewise no necessity that he shou'd  
 ever or rather always direct its Mo-  
 tions? Can the Formation of Animals  
 or Plants be accounted for from the  
 Action, any more than from the Ex-  
 tension of Matter? Or are you able to  
 imagine that the Action and Reaction of  
 Bodys, of all the Particles of Matter on  
 one another, cou'd ever have the Contrivance  
 to make any one of those admirable  
 vegetable or animal Machines? All  
 your Skill in Mechanism can no more  
 help you, than it did **CARTESIUS**,  
 to find out Rules and Engines for  
 making either a Man or a Mouse.  
 All the jumbling of Atoms, all the  
 Chances you can suppose for it, cou'd  
 no more bring the Parts of the Uni-  
 verse into their present Order, nor con-  
 tinue them in the same, nor cause the  
 Organization of a Flower or a Fly, than  
 you can imagine that by tumbling to-  
 gether the Letters of a Printer a million  
 of times, they shou'd ever fall at last  
 into such a Position, as to make the  
*Æneis* of **VIRGIL**, or the *Iliad* of  
**HOMER**,

Letter HOMER, or any other Book in the  
 V. world. And as for the Infinity of Mat-  
 ter, it only excludes, what all reasona-  
 ble and good Men must exclude, an ex-  
 tended corporeal God, but not a pure  
 Spirit or immaterial Being. I am per-  
 suaded, that in omitting many other  
 common Objections, you purposely  
 spar'd me, knowing there was no end  
 of Absurditys from false or precarious  
 Systems ; Absurditys so monstrous, that  
 they have driven several of the Carte-  
 sians (to name no others) to as mon-  
 strous Hypotheses, when not knowing  
 wherein consisted the moving Force,  
 and for avoiding the Transition of Ac-  
 cidents from one Subject to another,  
 they are not asham'd to say, that God  
 takes the Motion from one Bowl that  
 is running forward (for example) and  
 communicates it to the other against  
 which it rubs, continuing it during its  
 Course by his immediate Concurrence,  
 and taking it away by such degrees as  
 are observ'd in the ordinary Laws of  
 Motion. Is this to explain any thing?  
 Or are these the men that laugh at  
 Sympathy, Antipathy, occult Qualitys,  
 or the like ? I know to whom I ad-  
 dress my self, when I speak of every  
 thing

thing so succinctly; any the least Hint being enough for you, to work out all the rest by your own most happy Genius: besides that the ordinary Solutions can never satisfy any man who denies the ordinary Suppositions.

Letter  
V.

31. PRAY, against your writing to me next, be pleas'd to consider whether the Mathematicians (who are generally the best and strictest Reasoners, tho they build sometimes on groundless Suppositions, and have often made real Beings of abstracted Ideas) whether, I say, they did not perceive, without reflecting that they did so, the Necessity of this intrinsic and essential Action of Matter, by their *Conatus ad Motum*? I have purposely omitted insisting on this, when I shew'd you that it was the Discovery of the same perpetual and universal Action, that gave a Being to the Systems of the Stoics, Plastics, Hylozoics, and others: for my Intention has not bin to write all I cou'd say on this Subject, but as much as I thought necessary to answer your Objections, and to bring you over to the same Opinion. Neither will I point out to you what further use in  
Philosophy

Letter V. Philosophy may be made of this essential Motion of Matter, besides a clearer Knowledg of Nature in general, and the particular Decision of the Controversys about the moving Force, about local Motion without or with a Void, about the nature of Space, and the Infinity of Matter. I am confident that before your reading thus far, you have already made the Application of this Doctrin to several other Difficultys, having impartially revolv'd in your own Mind the unsatisfactory Guesſes and miserable Circles, rather than genuine Explications of the Schools; and that you have consider'd likewise what numberless Errors may branch themselves over the whole Body of Philosophy, from any one false Principle laid down for undisputed Truth, without Proof or Examination. What Observations of this kind I have made my self from time to time, I shall freely impart to you and our common Friend, who alone philosophizes at Court, and who exceeds all the rest in Politeness and Address, as much as he does in Wisdom and Literature, his superior Genius and admirable Sense no less distinguishing him in  
ordinary

ordinary Ceremonys, than in the nicest Letter  
and most arduous Points of State Af- V.  
fairs. But I shall give you no further ~~~~~  
trouble, SIR, till you are next dis-  
pos'd to honor me with your Com-  
mands.

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*F I N I S.*

